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UNKNOWN LANDS

The Story of Columbus

UNKNOWN LANDS

The Story of Columbus

By

VICENTE BLASCO IBAÑEZ

AUTHOR OF "FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE," "BLOOD AND SAND," "THE MOB," ETC.

Translated from the Spanish by

ARTHUR LIVINGSTON

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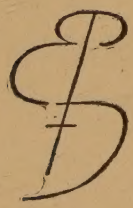

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UNKNOWN LANDS

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CHAPTER I

ON THE HIGHWAY TO CORDOBA

The younger of the two dropped the stick on which he was leaning, his knees gave way, and slipping through the arms of his companion who had run to support him, he lay stretched on the ground beside a clump of thick bushes.

"I can do no more, Fernando, the Lord so help me!"

His delicate, almost girlish face grew paler till it had turned a greenish white. After several anguished twitches of the lids, his black almond-shaped eyes closed.

Fernando knelt at his side, his arms about him, murmuring words of encouragement:

"Lucero, my darling, come, courage! Don't give up! Rest a little and we can go on, to spend the night at Cordoba!"

But his companion seemed not to hear. Instinctively he raised his head till it rested on Fernando's shoulder; then he fell asleep, with no signs of life except a faint and labored breathing.

The youth called Fernando, still kneeling, looked around. There was no one in sight, in either direction along the road, nor in the adjoining pastures.

It was the year of our Lord, one thousand four hundred and ninety-two, five months after the famous war

for Granada had been brought to a close. The King and Queen who were henceforth to be called "the most Catholic" had entered the Alhambra on the second of January, to look down as victors upon the conquered capital of the last Mussulmans of Spain.

In these early hours of an afternoon of Maytime, the earth seemed to be exhaling the strength and fragrance of its own rejuvenation. Nowhere were there signs of man or his handiwork. The two wayfarers were alone between half-wooded pasture lands where the bushes, covered with their spring clusters, rose from a sterile ground flecked with red, white, and yellow wild flowers. Beyond the thickets that lined the highway—a muddy cart-path, this, rather than a road—a few cattle, almost wild, were chewing their cud in broad clearings covered with short grass, or lazily trudging the mire of a nearby swamp hole to drink. These animals were the only living beings in the solitude. The herdsmen were evidently far away, and gave no answer to the cries which Fernando uttered in fright at the collapse of his comrade.

When the young man saw that he could find no help on that vast unbroken plain, he let fall the head that was resting on his arm. Then he released a canvas sack he was carrying over one of his shoulders—to judge by its softness it probably contained clothing—and placed it as a pillow under Lucero's head. Finally he removed a much flattened wine bag he carried at his belt, and with more words of cheer, forced the nozzle between the youth's teeth and drained the last drops of liquid into his mouth.

The scant refreshment revived Lucero for a moment. He half opened his eyes for a glance of thankfulness, then closed them again with a faint whisper:

"I am hungry!"

At these words Fernando was smitten with a pang of dismay. Inside the improvised knapsack there was nothing at all to eat. Their last crumb of bread they had consumed at noon. And no help near!

Both of them were poorly dressed, but their garments, threadbare as they seemed, were of better materials than those commonly used by peasants in the country or by the masses of the towns. They had coats reaching to their knees, woolen breeches, and caps pulled down over hair that was cut on a line with the lobes of their ears. Their breeches were patched, here and there, though not all the holes were mended. The coats, soiled by the dust, were worn to the woof but still had traces of the high coloring that bore witness to excellence at the time of purchase.

The wine seemed to have done Lucero good. He was now sleeping peacefully. His friend did not dare urge him to continue the journey—Lucero evidently preferred to lie there with his eyes closed in the shade of those flowering bushes, so cheerfully musical from the insects that flitted about over their coarse leaves or went hunting for the sugary sap of their blossoms. Fernando realized at last that they would not reach Cordoba that day, and thought with uneasiness of still a third night under the open sky, but this time without wine, without food, and without any chance companion to be of assistance. Was this possible? Could people actually perish in the very midst of a land of Christians, like sailors wrecked on some desert island while en route to the Guineas for "hauls" of gold? Were he making this journey alone, he would not have winced; but he had Lucero with him, a young and frail thing, whose feet had begun to bleed the second day from the bruises in-

flicted on them by the hard leather buskins which he himself had provided.

Fernando was seventeen years old, and Lucero only fifteen, both from the same place, Andujar.

Fernando's father, Pero Cuevas, had fought the first campaign of Granada as squire to one of the great lords who always had attended the King, don Ferdinand, from the latter's first expedition. But finally two Moorish arrows had pierced him through and through in the taking of a town, and he had fallen dead from the top rungs of a storming ladder.

In reality, the boy had known only his mother. In those days of continuous warfare, the squire had appeared in his home only at very rare intervals. Son of a widow, strong of body, and accustomed to tales of danger and violence, Fernañdo had enjoyed an up-bringing of his own choice. At ten he decided that he had had enough of the "Study," a school of poor quality whither he had been sent to learn to read badly and to write worse, and to memorize a few principles of Christian doctrine by dint of repeating them aloud over and over again. He preferred the open fields beyond the city, where in shirt and trousers he could play with other boys of his age, "hitting the ball," as the phrase went, or practicing archery and fencing with lance or broad wooden sword, shamming battles between Moors and Christians that began with laughter and often ended with bleeding limbs and bruised heads.

In addition to these noisy entertainments for the body, he had others that were quieter, and more pleasurable to the soul. He lived, with his mother, in a little house belonging to the nobleman whom the late squire had served. Free rent, the gifts which the lord in question made from time to time to the widow of his old adjutant, and a

pension of a few hundred *maravedis*, which a relative of the family, a priest, had obtained from Isabella in recognition of Pero Cuevas's services in war, enabled the two to live with what amounted to ease. In the same street a barber had hung out his sign—in that day of smooth shaven faces, from the King down to the meanest peasant, the barber's trade was a good one—and did all his work in the street in front of the door, resigning himself to going inside his dingy hovel only on days when it rained. All the idlers of the quarter drifted to this center of information and publication. Seated on the stone steps of the nearby houses or on rustic stools, they talked and gossiped, sometimes with one another, then again with the barber or with the customer who occupied the great wooden chair and had to conduct his conversations through puffs of white soapy foam. Almost always some guitar thrummer would be present to furnish tremulous sentimental chords for the murmuring voices.

And they talked! They talked of the war for Granada —the great emprise of those days; of the revolt of certain proprietors in Galicia, the last defenders of the lost cause of feudalism; of the negotiation of don Fernando de Aragon with the King of France—and here they had occasion to praise the subtlety of their king as knowing in the wiles of diplomacy as cunning in the strategy of war. As the afternoon wore on, someone would sing the last *trovetes* and *versetes* to come into vogue, while others would tell of recent miracles wrought by saints, or listen to pitiful stories of Christians made captive by the Moors and giving up their lives rather than their faith. Nor did a month go by that details did not come in of some crime committed by the Jews—not in the neighborhood of course, but away off somewhere, at the other end of Spain; usually the stealing of a Christian

child and his secret crucifixion, in imitation, this, of the death of Our Lord.

The sacristan of a church in the vicinity, a man of some letters who could read with the majestic solemnity of a priest saying mass, would sometimes, as a tribute to the gathering, bring a written manuscript—the adventures of Sir Amadis of Gaul, or of other knights who conquered islands, rescued enchanted princesses and gave mortal combat to giants, dragons, devils (possessors all of magic powers), each page resonant with thrusts of sword or lance that felled whole squadrons of warriors. And the son of the squire Cuevas would listen to these marvels with wide opened eyes, the lobules of his nostrils trembling with emotion. Some day he would do something himself, he would, so only God and Good Fortune gave him strength! What a pity the war with the Moors was about over! But probably men would go on fighting even if they had to cross a sea to get at each other; and beyond the Ocean Sea there were very wonderful lands —the lands of Prester John, for instance, and the Indies, where the kings were all pagans (and therefore legitimate game), with great cities, palaces plated with gold, and huge beasts called "ivories," with moving snouts, long curved teeth, round feet, and towers full of archers on their backs. Let the good Lord find a way to send him into a place where a decent Christian could fight with better luck than his father, the squire, had fought against the Moors of Spain, and he would do the rest!

The second great diversion of his youth was to talk with Lucero, daughter of don Isaac Cohen.

The Jewish quarter was quite near Fernando's house. According to what he had heard, a long time before he was born, perhaps in days when his grandparents were children, the Jews had been repeatedly abused and robbed

by the Christians in town, just as they still were being in Cordoba and other places farther away. Most of the Jewish families had finally accepted baptism in order to live in peace, such individuals becoming "new Christians" or "converts." Others, fewer in number, remained loyal to the faith, often with the self-sacrifice of martyrs.

One of these latter was don Isaac Cohen. Humble and conciliating toward his bitterest enemies, with gentle words for everyone, accepting insults with a smile, don Isaac had an iron will in everything pertaining to religion. He thought it essential to believe what his parents and his grandparents had believed, along with the countless generations of Jews who, according to a legend preserved in the synagogues, had dwelt on Spanish soil for two thousand years—much longer than Christianity itself. The richest man among his people in Andujar, don Isaac helped the poorer ones with his money and all of them with words of faith and cheer in moments of persecution. As for the Christians, even the "Old" ones found don Isaac Cohen a most useful individual when they were caught in financial straits—he was always ready to make a loan (if the security were high enough); but for that reason also, he was the hated usurer who came at most untimely moments to demand his due and to whom many wished an early death as the simplest way of cancelling obligations.

Fernando Cuevas, like other urchins of the city, had often gone and shouted insulting words in front of the houses of the Jews, and he remembered that he had even thrown stones, from a distance, at don Isaac Cohen and other leading men of the synagogues, all persons with money and reputed to exert mysterious influences on the commercial life of the neighborhood. But this had not prevented him from joining in a game, on occasion,

with boys from the Jewish quarter and others from the Moorish section where the "mudejares," or Mohammedan Spaniards, lived.

In all Spanish cities of that time, there were Spanish Jews and Spanish Mohammedans, followers these of the Moorish regime, who had submitted to the advance of Christian Castile and Christian Aragon, but remained faithful to their former beliefs and their traditional customs. Jews were never to be found among the slaves. On the other hand, hardly a noble family but counted Moors or Moorish half-breeds, men and women, among the servants it held in bondage. The Christian boys always bullied the children of Moors and Jews in their games. Those who came from families of "converts" or "new Christians," anxious to have their origin forgotten, would obey their little tyrants in everything. It was they who were most cruel in the violences they inflicted on the more unfortunate races.

Fernando did not care to remember how many times he had pulled the hair of don Isaac's younger daughter, driving her in terror into the doorway of her house. Later on, Lucero's submissiveness in his presence, the timorous shyness of a frightened mouse that came over her the moment he appeared, finally changed his attitude when he was about fourteen. He then suddenly came forward as the protector of the Cohen girl, cudgelling his playmates whenever they tried to torment her; and he began to loiter about the house of the wealthy Israelite, waiting for Lucero's pale face with its great long-cut eyes to appear at one of the few barred windows —the sole exterior apertures of that building, the door of which, from its thickness and its heavy iron work, was like the gate to a fortress. And don Isaac's daughter began, in her turn, to notice the son of the squire, and to

find that her one reason for living lay in inventing pretexts for going out into the street where she could talk to him.

A will as strong as her father's seemed gradually to be forming under Lucero's timid servile exterior, the inheritance of numberless generations of despised and persecuted Jews. Fernando was sure—he did not know just how it would come to pass—that some day Lucero would be his wife and that they would go off somewhere in the world together to win seignory and fortune; so he let time go by without doing anything, supported stintingly by his mother, and observed at a distance by don Isaac, a shrewd individual who had begun to take cognizance of the attentions which this youthful, insolent, and penniless Christian was paying to his younger daughter. At times, on passing the boy in the street, he would look at him slyly with eyes that shone like fiery gold while the little tuft of grayish hair in the middle of his lower lip would tremble enigmatically.

The siege of Granada was a busy period for the Jew of Andujar. Isaac Cohen lent aid to the Sovereigns, as did many of his faith, with voluntary gifts of money and provisions for the Christian army. Don Abraham Señor, the richest of the Spanish Israelites, whose fortune was reckoned in dozens of *cuentos* (so millions were called in Spanish in those days) and who held from the Crown of Spain the collectorship of taxes in Castile, had urged all of his faith to do their utmost, by loans and other services, to render themselves agreeable to the Sovereigns. But once Granada had fallen, the ill-feeling which had been smouldering for centuries, flaming up only at rare intervals in movements of the rabble against the Jews, burst out like a volcano which had been rumbling harmlessly for generations.

Two months before, the worst fears of the thoughtful men in the synagogues had been realized: the "most Catholic Monarchs," Ferdinand and Isabella, now free of the Moors, had decided to rid themselves also of the Jews. All Spaniards must henceforth be of one religion. Such Jews as were unwilling to become Christians, were ordered to leave the realm within a period of three months. Numerous Christian preachers began moving from city to city, urging all the inhabitants of the ghettos to abjure their "heretical depravity"—their *heretica parvedad*—and ask for baptism, the only means of escaping expulsion. Many Jews, indeed, renounced their traditional creed in order to retain the houses and lands they owned; but others, again, chose to remain faithful to their ancient law.

Now was the time for the rich in the synagogues to come to the rescue of their poorer comrades. The Rabbis showed, in this emergency, a prophet-like exaltation such as had inspired the chieftains of the Jews of old in their Exodus from Egypt. All agreed that they had suffered enough from persecutions in the land of Spain during ten centuries past! Much as they loved that soil, it was better to bid farewell to it forever! They reminded their flocks of the Pharaohs and of the servitude the tyrants of Egypt had imposed upon God's Chosen People! But the Jews would now leave Christian Spain as they had once left pagan Egypt, certain that Jehovah would protect their caravan on its journey over the world, as He had fed and guided and comforted the multitudes led by Moses over the wastes of Sinai!

The Old Christians, and some of the New who had intermarried with families of the purest Spanish lineage, welcomed this *pronunciamento* of the Sovereigns with great satisfaction. As they believed, living would now be

easier, money more abundant, work better paid, when the "race accursed" had vanished forever from Spanish soil.

A popular song had spread with great rapidity over the Realms of Castile and Aragon. First put forward by street entertainers and blind musicians, it was now being taught by mothers to the children at their firesides, and sung by muleteers on the distant mountain trails:

> Fie, Jews and Jewesses,
> Pack up your things,
> Over the seas with you—
> So bid the Kings!

The future exiles were permitted to sell their properties within the three months; but they were forbidden to take with them either gold, silver or gems, or anything, indeed, save their personal clothing. Thus it came about that a race renowned and hated for its skill in trade saw itself obliged, as a chronicler of the time expressed it, to "sell a city mansion for an ass, and a farm in the country for a roll of cloth or linen."

The Jewish communities took their precautions at this critical juncture. They provided, among other things, that "every female over twelve years of age should marry immediately." Thus "she would go forth in the shelter and company of a husband" who would support her and shield her, while her parents also would have fewer difficulties in preparing for their journey.

It was just at this moment that don Isaac suddenly received a new proposal for his daughter's hand. It came from a Christian gentleman, no less, from a man who boasted title as a former butler, or gentleman-in-waiting to the King, and who emphasized, furthermore, that his marriage with Lucero would not only make it possible

for the young Jewess to escape exile, but might also furnish a means whereby don Isaac might in a sense save a large part of his fortune by settling it on the girl.

The old rabbi's attitude toward this unexpected proposition could not be long in doubt. Such a marriage could take place only after Lucero had requested baptism, a step which that man of inexorable faith would not consider taking for a moment. Indeed, don Isaac could not understand Debora, his third wife who had borne him Lucero as her only child. Still youthful, still beautiful, but normally an idolent retiring creature, doña Debora was showing considerable spirit in urging acceptance of the Christian's offer. Not only did she urge acceptance; when don Isaac announced his final determination to refuse, doña Debora suggested to Lucero that she consent to being forcibly carried off by the "royal butler," a man whom the mother found not very attractive on the whole, but who did furnish one member of her family an avenue of egress from a ruinous emergency.

In these circumstances, the two lovers saw themselves beset by a double danger. If Lucero remained in her father's house, don Isaac would surely order her to marry one of the young Jews. If, on the contrary, she followed her mother's counsel she would soon be in the power of the "royal butler." The man, in fact, was continually boasting to doña Debora of his influence with the authorities in the town, and of the ease with which he could effect the abduction he was now proposing. He had also become aware of Fernando's friendship for the young Jewish girl, and had even found occasion to approach the lad and bid him cease his attentions to Lucero, on pain of being imprisoned by "the authorities," on some pretext or other.

Never, up to this time, had Fernando Cuevas encoun-

tered adventure save such as he had read of in books or heard by word of mouth. But now suddenly he seemed to shake off the inertia of his lazy, humdrum idle existence, where nothing ever happened, where the only horizons were the walls of his small town. Why should he not carry Lucero away himself? And the Jewish girl also seemed to find within her soul the rash courage that many women of her race have displayed in moments of danger. The wife should follow her husband blindly! But the only husband she could ever have would be Fernando Cuevas!

The decision of the young people to run away was hastened by an episode which seemed to threaten the freedom of Fernando as well. The "royal butler" chanced to encounter him one day in the neighborhood of the Cohen house and in ordering him off threatened to have him beaten. Such insults were certain to have consequences with a youth of the temper of Cuevas. Fernando had stepped back, picked up a stone, and aimed it at the head of the insolent *hidalgo*, taking to his heels, however, before a crowd was able to form in answer to the cries of the astonished "gentleman."

That very night according to the plans they had already vaguely formed in their talks together the two lovers fled the town with the intention of making their way to Cordoba. Fernando gave Lucero an extra suit of clothes he had—she was almost as tall as he, and her slenderness as a rapidly growing adolescent tended to conceal her peculiarly feminine lines and allowed her to pass very well as a young man. A male costume, besides, would be easier to walk in; and it was essential to conceal Lucero's Jewish origin, to avoid the hostility of the Old Christians and the penalties designated in the Decree of Exile.

At first, Fernando had thought of taking the short road to Cordoba, following the course of the Guadalquivir; but then he had chosen a more out-of-the-way route frequented only by the herders of the *Mesa*. On these roads they would be less likely to have embarrassing encounters.

Their first night they slept in a herder's cabin, introducing themselves as two brothers both of whose parents had died, and who were going to Cordoba to live with one of their uncles. All the next day they spent on the road, meeting only a few travellers, and these of such disquieting aspect that they preferred to avoid their company. The Sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, had established the *Santa Hermandad*, or "Holy Brotherhood," some years before. This dread constabulary was gradually putting an end to brigandage by dint of cruel punishments. The roads were growing safer, and people were already venturing to travel alone; but there still remained a few *golfines*, a few outlaws who infested the highways during the long wars between Moors and Christians and the civil discord which desolated the country in connection with the struggle between the Crowns and the feudal barons.

Far different from the tranquil routine of their native town was the life into which the two young people now saw themselves plunged. They came to a black, hard-barked ilex tree along the roadside, and there, hanging to one of its branches was the body of a man, his bosom pierced with arrows like the images of Saint Sebastian they had seen in the churches. It was a bandit, executed by the scouts of the Holy Brotherhood, who had a legal right to riddle with bolts from their cross-bows any criminal caught in the act of his crime. The state of lawlessness in which the future Catholic Sovereigns had

found the country seemed to counsel such summary justice. For that matter, the two fugitives were fearful of encountering the Brotherhood themselves; and twice they took to the thickets of wild roses now bordering their path, as they spied in the distance the red trousers, the white coats, and the mulberry casques, of a royal patrol, the officers of the law riding along with cross-bows slung over their shoulders and short swords at their belts.

At a number of forks they selected the wrong turn and had to retrace their steps. So night came on, and they rested through it on the bare ground. Lucero bravely strove to contain her tears, but laments were continually escaping her. Hitherto she had known only the easy, sheltered, almost cloistral life imposed upon the women of the Jews and the Mohammedans. She left her house but rarely and knew nothing of violent exercise. Her tender feet were soon causing her great suffering from the blisters and bruises of the long march. They slept like a brother and a sister with their arms about each other, sunk in a dream that was like a leaden nightmare for both. They awoke still tired and very hungry, and breakfasted on the remnants of the food which Fernando had taken with him from home.

It was shortly after dawn when they resumed their journey. Lucero did her best to go forward, her companion trying to keep her spirits high now by imitating the calls of the birds they could see resting on the tree tops, now by throwing stones at the crows, now by whistling at the bulls in the pastures. These fierce animals would raise their heads, ready for the fray; but since Fernando and Lucero would be in prudent hiding in the shrubbery, the bulls would see no one, and again lower their muzzles to continue browsing on the short grass.

Cuevas had cut a stout stick for himself and a lighter one to serve as a cane for Lucero. He did not dare impart to her the information he had obtained from a wayfarer they had met early in the morning: they had been on the wrong road for more than twenty-four hours, and were heading not toward Cordoba directly, but toward the main highway that led from that city to Granada. At noontime, their last piece of bread had gone. In reality Lucero had eaten almost all their food, since the young man kept pretending to take his share, but managing so that the girl would have it all. Two hours later the daughter of don Isaac sank to the ground without enough strength to rise.

Fernando remained seated at her side, gently raising her head so that it would rest on his lap. He kept turning his anxious eyes now in one direction now in another along the road, which came down the slope of a hill behind and then ran on ahead into a steep ravine. No one! In his frightened solitude his mind reverted to almost forgotten lessons of his faith, and he addressed an unspoken prayer to the Virgin of Gaudalupe, at the time the most powerful of all the miraculous images of Spain:

"Great Lady, Mother of God, I pray thee: send someone to our aid!"

Not many moments had passed when he became aware that they were no longer alone. He could see no one but he thought he could hear voices. Shortly, over the hilltop behind, there appeared the tip of a cap, then a forehead, then a head, then the whole body of a man riding on a mule. But that was not all: the figure had hardly become visible at the waist, when another person, mounted on a second mule, but not so sleek a one, also came into view. A gentleman, without a doubt, travelling with his servant! He was riding a mule, as all

wealthy people did in those days. The mule could go farther and with a more comfortable stride than the horse, which latter was reserved for war and for short rides about town.

Fernando studied the man's costume anxiously, to guess, if possible, what sort of person he might be. A gentleman of quality, to judge by his garments; a hat of bass, set off with tapering stripes of red silk; a loose coat of green broadcloth, with a cape hanging down behind in a style the Moors of Granada had made popular among the Christians of Spain. The feet, visible under the flaps of the coat were shod in blue colored shoes topped with anklets and red cordoba. At his belt a sword, broad and somewhat shorter than those worn by the warriors of the royal armies. Fernando had loitered much about the shops of the armorers in Andujar; and he had heard men of experience in such matters say that swords of that kind were worn for the most part by captains of ships that went to sea. The man behind, to judge by his costume and bearing, was probably a rustic of the region where they now were—perhaps a hired muleteer, who had undertaken to handle the gentleman's baggage. This he had packed on a bony underfed mule, which he was also using for a mount.

As the gentleman reached the spot where Fernando was seated at Lucero's side, he drew in his startled mule and brought it to a stop. Then quietly and with courtly manner he enquired whether the youth lying on the ground were ill or perchance dead. In spite of Fernando's many worries at the moment, he could not help gazing at the face of the new-comer, as though he felt that this encounter were to have some influence on his future career.

As the man sat there on his mule, he seemed to be

tall, rather than not, with strong muscular limbs, shining and notably white eyeballs—the setting for dark blue eyes, a ruddy face with freckles, a hooked nose, smooth shaven cheeks, and startlingly red hair. However, most of his locks had already turned gray or white, this sign of age contrasting sharply with the impression of energy and self-reliance which his personality as a whole gave.

While surveying the features of this man who had appeared, as he believed, in answer to his prayer, Fernando was explaining in a faltering voice that his companion had fainted from fatigue and lack of food—they had no bread, they had no wine.

"By Saint Ferdinand!" the gentleman exclaimed. "Now that God is remembering me, I cannot allow such a handsome youth to die of hunger!"

And at his bidding, the rustic dismounted from his mule, unhooked a well filled sack of wine from the saddle-pack; and then, from a bag slung on behind, drew a long half-loaf of bread, a piece of hard oily cheese, which he began cutting into triangular chunks, and a length of sausage—*longaniza.*

Fernando fell avidly upon the food, for the mere sight of such good things suddenly quickened the hunger he had been suppressing for two days; and in order to partake of it, he rose to his feet, again resting his companion's head on the roll of clothing. The movement awakened Lucero, who opened her eyes and seemed to regain strength in the presence of these two strange men. In a voice at once soft and commanding as of a person accustomed to authority, the gentleman bade her eat and drink; and she obeyed as though it were impossible to do otherwise, though her best efforts were required to overcome her nausea.

While the two youths were eating their meal, the traveller in the green cloak continued plying Fernando with questions—Lucero, evidently, was not in a condition to talk:

"He is a younger brother?"

Fernando nodded in the affirmative, though trying to frame his answer in evasive words:

"He is the person I love most in the world! My father was killed by the Moors. We are going to Cordoba to put ourselves out as servants—if we find the chance."

"You are an Old Christian?"

Since the question referred to him alone, Fernando answered courageously:

"An Old Christian, so may I serve God! My name is Fernando Cuevas."

"And your brother?"

The youth hesitated a moment: then he thought of one of his playmates at Andujar, and replied:

"His real name is Pero de Salcedo, but we always called him Lucero at home!"

That brothers should have different names caused no surprise to the unknown gentleman. In those times a person chose among his ancestors the name that best suited him whether for its sound or for its aristocratic associations. The greatest general of the epoch in Spain, Gonzalo Fernandez, who was to be known as "the great captain" later on in Italy, had chosen that name for himself, while his elder brother became don Alonso de Aguilar. It was about a hundred years after this time that the Church established the rules that now prevail for the use of family names.

The gentleman stood silent for a moment, his head lowered on his chest, as though he were thinking deeply. Then he seemed to make a decision:

"In God's name I tell you, boy: since you are looking for a master, I will take you both! You have never been to sea?"

Fernando shook his head, but he added joyfully that he had no greater wish in life. He and his brother Lucero were eager to see new countries, and no employer could be better to their liking than one who travelled about from place to place.

At a command from the gentleman, the rustic assisted Fernando in lifting Lucero from the ground and seating her on the mule that carried the baggage. The man, as the gentleman explained, was a carrier of Cordoba, who had gone with a load to Granada. There he had met him and taken him into service. The boy, Salcedo, would not fall; he would be sitting astride the mule on the saddle in front of the driver! Fernando would ride behind on the other mule!

"Catch me about the waist, if you think you are slipping. But I think you won't. You seem to be a wide-awake young man, quick of foot and hand. Good! That is what I like!"

And they set out on the march again; but as they rode along the gentleman remarked, as though expressing aloud a thought he was thinking only for himself:

"Before we go on to the sea from Cordoba, we must get a donkey for you two young fellows. But at the sea, there we shall all change our mounts for other horses—horses of good stout oak!"

There was a long silence, broken only by the crunching of the eight hoofs in the red dust of the road or by grating sounds as they slipped on loose stones. But after a time Fernando, desirous of learning more about his unknown benefactor, asked in a respectful voice of the gentleman riding in front of him:

"My lord, and now my master—how should I address Your Worship?"

The man turned his head around and looked at him, a smile of triumphant pleasure on his face. He was so joyful within that he felt constrained to share his exultance even with these homeless vagabonds he had met on the side of the road.

"In Cordoba, whither we are bound, they call me by various names—I am known here as 'the captain' and there as simple 'master.' Many have called me 'don Out-at-elbows'; but the Sovereigns at last have ordered things better! Now they must call me 'don Cristobal'! You may do likewise, for the moment."

And he added after a pause: "When we reach the sea, you will address me in another way!"

CHAPTER II

GABRIEL THE PHYSICIAN

Many physicians there were in Cordoba, some confessedly Jews, others "New Christians," as though the mysteries of healing were a monopoly of the Jewish race; but none of them as celebrated as Gabriel de Acosta, who was commonly known about the city as "the Doctor," and required no further names to establish his identity. Gabriel de Acosta was the doctor *par excellence*. Other practitioners were just spent stars moving in obscure orbits around the sun of his wisdom.

He was still a young man—barely forty—dark complexioned, with black eyes, and hair that seemed even blacker, though the first touches of gray were beginning to sprinkle it. A lordly, majestic bearing native with him was heightened also by his long, sombre-colored robes, always of rich fabric, which seemed to emphasize and increase his authority as a man of learning; and the fact that the Sovereigns summoned him to court whenever a physician was needed during their residence in Cordoba, contributed mightily to the prestige and to the earnings of the shrewd "convert." Whenever the need was urgent, gentlemen of the nobility and merchants of opulence sent for him from great distances and regardless of expense; with the result that Doctor de Acosta was already rich and lived accordingly, certain as he felt that his income would not diminish.

His house in Cordoba was vast and commodious—al-

most a palace, and the luxury of its equipment was the talk of the city. One of the larger halls was filled with volumes—two thousand between manuscripts and prints. The doctor's travels had taken him all over Europe; and the numerous souvenirs of his tours he distributed about the rooms of his famous home—paintings, enamels, tapestries, not to mention the curios he had collected from grateful men of the sea whom he had treated for nothing and who brought him with their own hands from the Guinea coast rare fans of ostrich plumes, a lion pelt, grotesque idols worked in varnished woods, two giant elephant tusks. . . . And the sumptuousness and largess of his manner of living was in harmony with this setting. The doctor's table excited admiration even among people who considered themselves his social superiors by far. His wife received ladies of Cordoba in richly carpeted rooms, where chairs were replaced by Moorish cushions of fabulous worth. The doctor's bed was a story all by itself with its fat damask-covered pillows and its mattresses stuffed with precious downs!

This display—it was frankly such—created no hostilities for the physician. The Cordoba rabble, which hated Jews because they were rich, and Genoese, Flemings and Germans, because they did such profitable business in the country, had a certain liking for the luxury-loving doctor, as though a glow from his splendor were reflected somehow upon their town. His hand always opened at the appeal of need. The poor he attended without charge, and he worked cures which haloed his person with the worshipful awe accorded to magicians of achievement. The gamins who scribbled dirty words on the house fronts of the "converts" had never drawn even the picture of a pig on the spotless façade of the

doctor's residence. And yet Gabriel de Acosta was as much of a *marrano* as any other converted Jew. Not a hundred years had passed since the great massacres at the end of the Fourteenth Century when his Jewish forefathers had accepted baptism to save their lives and their properties, taking the name of Acosta like many of their fellow tribesmen in Spain and Portugal, and continuing after their "conversion" the exercise of the medical profession hereditary in the family.

Despite these antecedents, Gabriel de Acosta was a cause of no concern to the newly founded tribunal of the Inquisition, and not so much because the Inquisitors were sure of his Christian beliefs as because they were convinced he would never try to propagate the faith of Judah. They had reason to know that the doctor preserved not even a trace of the religious ideas of his ancestors—there could be no suspicion that he was secretly a Jew. For one thing, popular with the Christians, he was hated by the Israelites, not as a "convert"—thousands of Spanish Jews were in that case—but as a man who did not believe in anything—something far worse, in their fanatical eyes, even than being a Christian. Of his heresies, meantime, the Inquisitors were well informed; but they regarded him as a pleasant good-natured lunatic, who was wise enough to keep his crazy thinking to himself, or, who, at the worst, only dropped a paradox now and then by some inadvertent slip of the tongue. There was no danger in that—he could be winked at! Who was going to listen to a sceptic like Doctor Acosta at a time when faith was such a vital thing in life, when everybody was ready to kill and be killed for an article of dogma, and there was no one who did not have a religion of some kind? The doctor, furthermore, scrupulously observed all his duties as a Chris-

tian. He went to mass in conspicuous state every Sunday morning. He told the rosary at home at every curfew. He offered not the slightest impediment to the devotions of his wife, the beautiful and godly doña Mencia, a woman born of a long line of Old Christians who had come down from the North with King Fernando to aid in the conquest of Andalucia for the Cross!

Doña Mencia was a tall portly woman, with that lymphatic whiteness of skin which comes to odalisks and nuns and all women who lead sedentary secluded lives. Her doctor she admired as a man and as a scientist. With eyes of superstitious reverence she would see him sit for hours, in the room where he kept his books, in front of a huge folio volume, his forehead resting on his right palm. She herself could read only with difficulty and her hand would begin to shake whenever she had to undergo the torture of slowly tracing her signature in a rude scrawl. God had not seen fit to send her children, so she filled her idle hours by inventing new dishes for the doctor's table, personally supervising the kitchen, the pantry, and the wardrobe. Her evenings she devoted to embroideries, sitting on a heap of brocade cushions with two Moorish slaves at her elbows, young girls of great skill with the needle. She regularly attended all the ceremonies at the Cathedral, formerly the Grand Mosque, and at other churches which in days still recent had served as temples for Moor or Jew.

Spiteful tongues had betrayed to Doña Mencia several infidelities of her doctor, one, especially with a pretty Jewess of Andujar. But the Christian matron, though they roused her wrath at first, eventually learned to bear these little misfortunes. Men—why complain?—were built that way; and she was sure the doctor had higher regard for her than for any of the others. There

was the King, don Fernando, for instance! Did he not love and respect doña Isabel above all the women in the realm? And yet, once a campaign compelled him to travel alone, did he not leave bastard offspring behind him in all the towns of Spain where he stopped be it only for a few days? Soldiers and physicians—there was no escape from it—had to spend most of their time away from home, and their wives should not worry about what they did while they were away. As for affairs with Jewesses—well, few of the Kings of Spain who were much better than the doctor!

If the good-natured and charitable doña Mencia accepted her husband's reported waywardnesses with a lightness who could say how sincere and how affected, they were far more serious matters sometimes with Doctor Acosta himself. In spite of his unpopularity as a convert in the synagogues the proclamation of the Decree of Exile against the Jews was a source of great worry to him; and one element in his uncomfortable state of mind was the obligation he felt of keeping certain negotiations he was now engaged in from coming to the knowledge of his wife.

For some weeks previous to the month of May in the year 1492, Doctor Acosta had been in intimate connection with one Pero Gonzalez, a man distinguished from the dozens of other Gonzalez's in Cordoba by a title of which he was rather proud: "the Royal Butler." Gonzalez, in fact, had for some years been in charge of the pantries, the furniture and the tableware of the Royal Household, a post which made him an important personage whenever public functions involving refreshments were held at court. It was on just such an occasion, eight years before, that Doctor Acosta then at court in attendance on the Queen, had met the man, who, for his

part, was always eager to establish relations with people evidently in favor with the Sovereigns. Acosta regarded him as an intelligent fellow—perhaps as too intelligent, since, with his quickness of wit and his tireless energy, Gonzalez was always figuring in risky financial adventures where he had a faculty for coming out with as much money as other people lost. It was whispered about Cordoba that the "Royal Butler" secured the first of the doubloons which he now lent out at enormous usury from "savings" made on the provisions consumed at court. It was also whispered, more covertly, that he "was the best informed man in Spain," and that no small part of his doubtful income came from his knowledge of the intimate secrets of many prominent families. Certain it was that Gonzalez was at no pains to conceal his capacities as what was then known as a "trafficker." His services were available for anyone who could pay, when it was a question of favor or privilege at court to secure which required influence and "tactful management." Through a distant cousin named Garduña, Gonzalez could always be relied upon for affairs touching the Holy Brotherhood, of which the man Garduña was a powerful officer. At the moment Gonzalez was busy with numberless "cases" in connection with Jews departing from the country into exile, buying houses, horses, furniture, lands at prices greatly reduced and selling them at enormous profits; or even "discovering" in the archives of the Realm certificates of birth and marriage which proved the non-Jewish origins of many individuals of wealth.

Knowing well the complicated history and the unscrupulous character of Pero Gonzalez, it was with some misgivings that Doctor Acosta had called him to his house to seek his aid in a matter of importance which the

Doctor otherwise could think of no way to arrange.

Acosta had been dumbfounded at the precise information which Gonzalez possessed with regard to things which the doctor had supposed unknown to everyone.

"You may have heard," Acosta began, "of a certain rich Jew who lives in Andujar—don Isaac Cohen. He has a daughter by his third wife, doña Debora. The girl's name is Lucero."

"Yes, I know the whole story," the once Royal Butler replied, in an off-hand manner, probably assumed for the occasion. "This lady, doña Debora, was formerly the mistress of a famous physician in Cordoba—I will not mention his name. Don Isaac thinks the girl is his. Her real father is the doctor."

Angered at the insolent assurance with which the words were uttered, Acosta retained his composure sufficiently to answer:

"That is none of my business, nor of yours that I can see! However, I am interested in the girl for reasons which I do not think it necessary to state."

"I meant no offense," Gonzalez answered. "What can I do for you?"

"Her father is a fanatical Jew, determined to accept exile rather than be reasonable in the matter of faith. I am anxious to find some way to keep the girl from sharing in his misfortunes. I would like to have her stay in Spain. Of course I shall find some way to look after her."

Accepting a rather munificent sum for his expenses, Gonzalez had set out for Andujar the next day, bearing a brief note of introduction which begged doña Debora to have full confidence in anything that he should do or say. Within a fortnight he had returned, manifesting an extraordinary enthusiasm in the whole intrigue.

To his own great alarm, Acosta remarked that this dangerous man was now inspired by a purely emotional interest in an enterprise on which he had first embarked for the money there was in it. Gonzalez had seen Lucero, and the girl's fresh almost childish beauty had had a strange fascination for this bachelor of licentious life.

Gonzalez's plan could not have been simpler:

"The best way to free the girl from the law of exile is to marry her to a Christian. I have no wife. To do you a favor, Doctor Acosta, I should be perfectly willing to take the girl myself. The mother, doña Debora, liked the idea the moment I proposed it. She herself will follow don Isaac, wherever he goes. But in spite of the grand prophesies the Rabbis are making about the riches and prosperity Jehovah will bring to the Jews abroad, she is afraid of what will happen to the family. She would be happy to know that her daughter is safe in Spain, married to a friend of yours, and always under your—may I say fatherly—protection!"

To be sure, there were difficulties, as the former Royal Butler went on to explain. He had ventured to broach the matter to don Isaac, but that heroic patriarch had indignantly refused to allow a child of his to accept baptism.

"And there's another thing!" Gonzalez continued. "It seems the girl is more or less in love with a young fellow named Cuevas. He is always loitering about the Cohen house, whenever he thinks there's a chance of seeing her. But there will be no great trouble with him! I have already told him to go about his business. If he persists, I will have my friend Garduña drop a word to the Brotherhood down there. Garduña is Captain of the Brotherhood throughout this whole district, you know.

I can make some charge against this fellow Cuevas, and they will keep him locked up till this other matter is settled. Meantime they won't hurt him, if he behaves!"

Doctor Acosta sat up in fear of these brazen proposals of the court "trafficker," repentant now at ever having thought of using the good offices of such a man. However, as he well saw, it was now too late. He could do nothing but express his absolute refusal of any such solution of Lucero's problem as the ex-Royal Butler had in mind.

"Of course, I will do exactly as you wish!" Gonzalez replied. "I thought of marrying the girl, only to help you out! We will drop that idea then! But, as you can see, with don Isaac feeling as he does, there is no way to arrange matters through the court. All I can do now is carry the girl off, with her mother's consent, and get her here to Cordoba. Then you can do with her just what you like!"

These complaisant words did not altogether allay Doctor Acosta's fears. Though the ex-Royal Butler was trained in concealing his real feelings, the physician thought he could see in Gonzalez's eye a glint that betrayed the insincerity of his promises. With Lucero once in his power, the man could easily create a situation so complicated that he, Acosta, might find many reasons to consent to her baptism and marriage. Doctor Acosta had no children. An individual like Gonzalez might find it very attractive to feel himself the son-in-law and heir of a physician who attended potentates and royalties!

However, there was too little time for cautious action. At any moment Lucero might be forced by her father to marry within the Jewish faith, and then there would be no escape from the Exile. Besides, Gonzalez, when all was said and done, had a certain position at Court and

in Cordoba. There would be limits to any dishonest schemes he might be developing in his mind. There was even the chance that he might be honest! It was better on the whole to accept the plan for the abduction, making Gonzalez's reward handsome enough to temper his remoter ambitions with immediate satisfactions to greed!

And the sometime Royal Butler had returned to Andujar.

However, the man Gonzalez had also talked of other matters during this second long conference with the physician, and Doctor Acosta thought he had divined other curious aspects of the man's character. In spite of the shrewdness men of rapacious instincts make it a practice to cultivate, they are usually, he reflected, the most credulous men in the world, easily succumbing to the dreams of the first visionary spirit who dangles prospects of wealth before their eyes. Gonzalez, in the few years past, had amassed a considerable fortune, and he was planning to invest it in a fantastic enterprise for the discovery of the mines of Solomon and of the Empire of the Grand Khan which was being promoted by a man known to Gonzalez as "Master Cristobal"!

This idea of the sometime Royal Butler had been often in the Doctor's thoughts during the days following Gonzalez's second visit, and for other reasons as well. Master Cristobal's name had been figuring of late in the advices that came in from the Royal Encampment at Granada; and it so happened that Doctor Acosta had known Master Cristobal well for nearly six years. In fact, the sailor in question had often been in the physician's house, and had accepted favors and financial assistance from Acosta and Acosta's friends.

Nevertheless, in the years of their acquaintance the

Doctor had never been able to make up his mind about the "Captain," his judgments alternating between admiration and ridicule.

He said his name was Cristobal Colon and that he was a Genoese by birth. Most of the foreign merchants then resident in Spain were Genoese, or at least said they were; for such nationality tended to win them favor and support among the rich merchants of the famous Italian Republic, who held most of the great monopolies of the Spanish Realm. Yet this statement as to his origin which gave the so-called Colon access to people he was desirous of approaching was the only definite information the Doctor had been able to draw from the man's own lips. All the rest was vague and mysterious, one story contradicting another till the Doctor was sometimes tempted to regard the man Colon either as an incorrigible dreamer or as a downright liar.

A Genoese? Yet he spoke Italian, as well as the dialect of Genoa with difficulty! His favorite speech was the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean sea-ports, a mixture of Spanish, Provençal, Italian and Arabic words. He showed a foreign accent in speaking any particular tongue, though the languages he knew best were Spanish and Portuguese.

There was just as much doubt about his age. Sometimes he would pretend to more than forty; then again he would deny he were more than thirty, attributing the whiteness of his hair to the hard life he had lived at sea. More than once it occurred to Doctor Acosta that this "Genoese," whom he eventually learned to credit with a prodigious will, and who was ever more ready to prophesy or quote from the prophets than to speak in particular of his origins, might be a "convert" like himself, prudently concealing his Jewish ancestry in a

country where the hand of the law was falling heavily upon the members of that race.

With his well-known fondness for men of the sea, Doctor Acosta was inclined on the whole to take the man seriously. He would sit listening to him for hours in his library while Master Cristobal would be expounding his geographical fancies and outlining his plans for future voyages of discovery. At the time the man Colon was living on small subventions furnished him by the Duke of Medina-Coeli and other wealthy gentlemen. And this scanty living he eked out by chance invitations such as the Doctor was often glad to give him and by peddling printed books—then a novelty in Europe—from convent to convent or from scholar to scholar. The pretext for his visits to Doctor Acosta was usually the arrival of some new volume, which the physician would buy as much to help him out as because he wanted it.

Doctor Acosta had decided that Master Cristobal was a man of scant learning but of great natural ability. He talked vaguely and with discrepancies of voyages about the Mediterranean, always as mate or pilot, but never in actual command of a ship. From one allusion the Doctor gathered he had been a pirate in his youth, finding himself obliged to take to the water, during a combat off the coasts of Portugal, and making his way ashore on a bit of wreckage.

The man's history became clearer after his arrival in Portugal. Thence he had gone out on several voyages to the North of Europe, returning always to Lisbon which was then the greatest shipping center of Christendom. The Portuguese, at the moment, were advancing down the West Coast of Africa, founding one trading post after another and looking for a road to the Indies. Colon had participated in voyages to Guinea, where the Euro-

peans bartered cargoes of trinkets for cargoes of negro slaves. By virtue of this trade Lisbon had become an important slave market.

It was in Portugal that Colon married. His wife was a certain Felipa Muñiz, daughter of a Portuguese mariner named Pellestrello, who had discovered the Isle of Puerto Santo in the offings of Madeira. To this island, indeed, Colon had gone to live with his wife, working in the employ of his father-in-law, who had been appointed governor of the island he owned. After Pellestrello's death, Colon had access to all the man's papers, and had probably mastered most of the geographical information gathered by the School for Navigation founded at Sagres by the late Prince Henry, Infante of Portugal. By this time the Spaniards and the Portuguese, between them, had discovered Madeira, the Azores, the Canaries, and the archepelago of the Green Cape (Cape Verde). And the colonists on those volcanic isles, which had been fished as it were from the blue bosom of the Unknown Ocean, all believed that still other undiscovered lands lay beyond them.

Eventually the man Colon came back to Lisbon, and managed to find his way to the King with the proposal of a new voyage to the Indies, westward. He had figured that by sailing west for some seven hundred leagues, or twenty-eight hundred miles—a journey that could be made in a few weeks—it would be possible to reach Cipango and Cathay (Japan and China), countries of the fabulous riches described by Marco Polo.

The experts at the Court of Lisbon perceived at the outset that Master Cristobal was a man of scanty scientific information. There was nothing novel in his idea that the earth was spherical in shape. The Greeks of Alexandria had determined the shape of the Earth, and

quite accurately measured its circumference, long before the birth of Jesus Christ. In the Ninth Century of the Christian Era, an Arabic geographer named Alfagran had again amassed irrefutable proofs of the same theory. But this man, Colon, who knew Ptolemy, Euclid, and Alfagran only indirectly, had made a very natural mistake. He had interpreted the Greek mile as equivalent to the European mile of his own day; and this led him to believe that the Earth's volume was much smaller than the Greeks had ever said. At the same time, he thought Asia was much larger than the men of learning of his day knew it to be. As he saw it, the Asiatic continent covered a vast proportion of the globe's surface, reaching East to within two or three thousand miles of the Coast of Spain. However, it was less because of his scientific heresies than because of the ambitious and exorbitant terms which he demanded for leading the enterprise, that the King of Portugal was induced to reject his schemes. There was a fine spirit of national pride and scientific disinterestedness in the explorations conducted by the Portugese mariner under the inspiration of men like Prince Henry. The King did not like this foreigner who came to Court without scientific training but who came with grand expectations of gold, titles and honors to be won through a project which he was as willing to sell to one nation as to another.

The career of the man Colon, following this set-back in Portugal, was much easier to follow. He rarely talked of his wife; but the Doctor concluded that she was still living, probably in Lisbon. There seemed also to be a child, a boy, still in his infancy, and named Diego. Master Cristobal Colon also had a brother, Bartolomé Colon, who was going about from court to court in Europe, promoting the same scheme with which Cristo-

bal himself had failed in Portugal. Eventually the man had left Lisbon and come to Spain, where he had made connections with the Duke of Medina-Coeli. This Duke was a wealthy armorer, who had built a fine fleet of fishing vessels at the Port of Santa Maria, exploiting his monopoly of the tunny fisheries in the Straits of Gibraltar. It was the Duke of Medina-Coeli who had passed the man on to the Royal Court at Cordoba—in this city the Sovereigns had settled for a time to be nearer at hand to the campaigns against Granada.

One winter's evening of the year 1486, Doctor Acosta had a long conversation with the adventurer, in the comfortable library of the physician's mansion. Thanks to the good offices of the Duke, Colon was to be received by the Sovereigns immediately on their return to the city. In those days a doctor of medicine was not only a specialist in his science but a scholar learned in all the branches of knowledge. Colon knew that as the outstanding light among the scholars of Cordoba, Acosta would surely be consulted by the Sovereigns in connection with his proposal. That was why he was anxious to know the doctor's opinion in advance, though, convinced as he was of his own infallibility, he had never solicited such a judgment before.

Acosta had on many previous occasions sounded the readings of the mysterious Genoese. His only real book was the "Imago Mundi" of Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly, a geographical encyclopedia chiefly valuable for its quotations from the geographies of antiquity. Then he knew two other works, imaginative romances rather than books of science: the "Travels" of Marco Polo, the Venetian merchant, who had actually met the Grand Khan in China and even governed a province in that ruler's name; and the "Book of Wonders," a collection

of adventures, half real, half fantastic, attributed to an imaginary English gentleman, John Mandeville, but actually written by a Belgian physician from Liége.

The evening was not a happy one. Interested as he was in this strangely fascinating man, Acosta could not see how any man of careful study could possibly accept the geographical absurdities put forward by Colon. The world was much larger than the man supposed, the seas more numerous and more extensive. Surely it was nearer twelve than two thousand miles from Spain to China! Colon's face fell, as he heard these objections. He was certain that he was right. Only ignorance or envy could dispute him! And the man whom many were beginning to call "Don Out-at-Elbows," because of a poverty coupled with an arrogant pride, left the Doctor's house in anger, not to return thither for a long time.

Nevertheless, close as he stood to affairs at Court, Doctor Acosta was constantly hearing of the man's new disappointments and adventures. He heard of his love affair with a girl named Beatrice de Arana, from whom he had had a second son. He heard of the advances he kept making to the Sovereigns whether at Cordoba or at the Encampment before the walls of Granada. The King and Queen, busily bringing a great national and religious war to a successful conclusion, were really too deeply involved to think of anything else. They had not dismissed Colon. They were merely putting him off from week to week, from month to month. Meanwhile he was winning many people to his idea, courtiers and priests, ignorant of geography and ignorant of the sea, who felt the allurement of this romantically experienced sailor and were dazzled by the glowing reality with which he could clothe his dream.

Among such people, and significantly for Colon's

origin as Doctor Acosta thought, were certain converted Jews, much esteemed by King Ferdinand and entrusted with high offices at Court. The most important of them all was Luis Santangel, a banker of Valencia, whose ancestors only a generation back had practiced the religion of Judah. Santangel was convinced of the practical nature of Colon's proposal. While others talked of the Grand Khan's gold and of the wealth of Asia in metals and precious stones, he had his mind on an important commodity of commerce—on the spices of Asia, cinnamon, pepper, cloves, ginger. Since the fall of Constantinople in the year 1453, the Turks and Arabs had full control of the lucrative trade in spices. Let this man Colon chance to find his route to the Indies westward, and Spain would become the greatest commercial power in Christendom—greater even than Venice!

Unfortunately, just as in Portugal, Colon failed of securing the help he desired because of his enormous pretentions. In exchange for an idea which the most sympathetic scientists could only call wild, he asked immediately for money, ships, and men; but then, in case of success, he demanded a share in perpetuity of all income that might be derived from lands discovered, the rank of Admiral of the Ocean Sea for the Kingdom of Castile, and nomination as Viceroy of the new territories, a title that should descend upon his children and his children's children forever! It was clear that this penniless man, who was risking not a cent of his own, was dreaming of rule over an hereditary monarchy greater than any State in Europe! He sounded crazy! And Ferdinand and Isabella dismissed him as King John of Portugal had done.

For a moment Doctor Acosta had supposed that this

fiasco would mean the end of the Genoese and his geographical deliria; but he had soon heard another story which made him reflect once more on the enormous faith and will power of the man, and his capacity for winning in the face of apparently insurmountable obstacles. Colon had departed from Granada penniless and a vagabond, with not enough money to hire or buy a mule. He had walked to Seville, to get his elder son Diego, with the intention of taking the boy—the mother had recently died—to some distant relatives in Huelva.

Still begging his way, and travelling afoot, leading the little boy by the hand, Colon had come one night to the tiny Convent of La Rábida, a short distance from Huelva, to ask for a night's lodging. There he had chanced to tell his story to the Warden of the monks, one Father Perez, sometime confessor to the Queen, Isabella. The kindly and simple-minded priest fell under the spell of this unfortunate man of the sea. He kept "Don Out-at-Elbows" at the Convent long enough for a letter to reach the Queen. Then the priest went in person to Granada to solicit a reconsideration of the sailor's proposals. The King was in good humor over the capture of the Moorish stronghold. He consented to see Colon again. Again he was amused and angered at the grotesque terms of the proposed contract. Did this beggar seriously think of becoming Emperor of Asia and the Indies?

It was again the "convert" Santangel who persuaded the King and with a two-faced argument. Why not give the man all the titles he asked for? He would reach Asia, if at all, with a couple of boats and a handful of men. With such a force would he be able to make very serious trouble for a kingdom which, according to his own

stories, counted armies of millions with armed elephants by the thousand? The main consideration was a new route to the spices!

The king agreed to finance the expedition. But with what? The royal treasury and the sources of more revenue were exhausted by the long war against the Moors. To pay the troops for the final attack Queen Isabella had had to pawn her jewels with the usurers of the different cities. No more money could be raised on them. A third time the convert Santangel manned the breach: he would loan a million *maravedis*—about fifteen thousand modern dollars—from his own moneys, to enable Colon to hire and equip a fleet of vessels and start on his journey. And as evidence of his generosity, but still to keep within the forms of sound business, he agreed to make the interest on the loan merely one and one-half percent!

"But it is twelve thousand miles to China, and not two!" Doctor Acosta had observed to Pero Gonzalez, when the once Royal Butler had spoken of his interest in Colon's expedition. And when the "trafficker" had gone off again to Andujar, his fears for Lucero continued to be crossed by the mental image of a fleet of tiny vessels making their way out into the wastes of the Sea of Darkness, looking for a Grand Khan who was no more in a land they would never reach!

One afternoon, about a week later, Doctor Acosta was reading in his library when he became aware that the room was darkening with the approach of evening, while he could hear through the house all those particular sounds which announce the proximity of supper. He stepped to the window to draw the shutters preparatory to calling for a lamp. As he looked out into the street he saw a young gentleman walking along past the house, his head lowered in thoughtful mood. The Doctor recog-

nized him at once. His small but well proportioned body suggested muscles of the toughness and elastic temper of a bent sword. The twilight had not yet vanished from the streets, and Acosta could see the costume of the young man: a cape of black and red stripes, lifted on one side by the shaft of a scabbard; over his breast a heavy chain of gilded metal; on his cap a number of jaunty plumes.

"In fine fettle is Don Alonso as he comes home from the war!" the Doctor thought to himself. "This bodes ill for old Herboso!"

Perez Herboso, doctor of laws, was a famous jurist of the town, a Royal Counsellor much appreciated at Court for his legal learning. He owned a large mansion in Doctor Acosta's street, where he lived, a widower, with a daughter Isabel, so named in homage to the Queen. Herboso, indeed, was having his difficulties with the girl, who was now of marriageable age. The father had in mind for her some rich young man well situated at Court. The girl herself seemed differently disposed. She had been lending a willing ear to the gallantries of one Alonso de Ojeda, a young gentleman of scant fortune, then serving his apprenticeship as a soldier with the Duke of Medina-Coeli. A splendid man-at-arms, don Alonso had already marked himself as but slightly responsive to discipline. He was not known in Cordoba as a man likely ever to settle down!

Acosta had not seen the boy for nearly a year. Ojeda had been away fighting the Moors at Granada. Now with the fall of that city, he was back in town again, lured from the Duke's camp by the daughter of the jurist. The physician shook his head, as the young man walked on in the direction of Herboso's house.

"He's a hot-headed youngster," he thought. "But the

old man has a wicked temper too! One of these evenings we shall be having trouble in this quiet neighborhood!"

He did not have time to see whether don Alonso stopped at the mansion below. Doña Mencia was calling at the library door. Supper was waiting in the dining room.

When the meal was over, doña Mencia recited a rosary with a pater noster of silver and coral, while the Doctor, sprawled in a chair, mechanically muttered the responses in unison with the maids and servants of the house, as well as with the hostlers who had come in for the devotions. The two little Moorish girls, who had recently been bought and baptized by the lady, also joined in the prayers, sitting on the floor and moving the upper parts of their bodies to and fro as though they were repeating a lesson in an Arab school.

The services finished doña Mencia reported an interesting piece of news to her husband. That man, named Cristobal Colon, who had come to the house so often with books to sell and whom they had also had at dinner, was back in Cordoba again. He had thought for a moment of seeking Doctor Acosta's hospitality, since he bore letters patent from the Sovereigns billeting him on any man of means he might choose. Finally he had decided to go to the place where he had always lived in Cordoba —the Inn of the Three Wise men, kept by Antonio Buenosvinos; only this time he would take the best room in the house. He was now a person of importance, and for once he had money enough!

Doctor Acosta was thinking of going to bed when a series of loud knocks resounded from his front door. A servant came hurrying into the room:

"A gentleman on horseback! He asks to see the señor doctor at once!"

Acosta was accustomed to visits at all hours; he imagined this time it might be an urgent call from some gentleman from the country. But as he was entering the library to receive the gentleman, the servant murmured in a lower tone:

"He said to tell you: it is señor Pero Gonzalez, back from Andujar!"

The doctor started with a movement at once of fear and anticipation: was Lucero in trouble?

Gonzalez was waiting impatiently in the library. His sharp, wrinkled face, too old for a man younger by years than Acosta, wore now an expression of anger and anxiety. His clothes were covered with dust, as though from a hard ride. He still had on his boots and spurs. Though his bald head seemed to be drooping over his shoulders from fatigue, he declined the physician's invitation to take a chair.

"I hurried back to tell you," he began. "They've run away!"

And he proceeded in a voice trembling one could not say whether with anger or humiliation to tell the outcome of his intrigue at Andujar.

"I had everything arranged!" he continued. "The Brotherhood was about to arrest the fellow. I picked a quarrel with him, and he hit me with a stone. But he got an inkling of what was going on and was not to be found the following day. The girl had disappeared too. However, we're on their track. The scouts of the Brotherhood have been ordered to watch for them everywhere. On the way here from Andujar I inquired at all the inns and houses. One man I met on the road thought he saw a young fellow answering the description of Cuevas headed toward the Granada highway; but there was no girl with him—just another boy. Perhaps they are aim-

ing at Seville. We shall find them sooner or later; and when I get my hands on them . . ."

Doctor Acosta could see that in the anger the former Royal Butler kept expressing toward the young man there was something more than irritation at two fruitless rides over hard country roads.

"On the other hand," he finally resumed, "they may turn up here in Cordoba. They are not here yet. I had to have the gates opened to let me in after dark—they always do for me, you know, as a relative of Garduña. No one arrived from the South today—except Don Cristobal, with his man, and two valets. He is stopping at Buenosvinos' place. I shall see him tomorrow. I thought of going to the inn myself tonight; but then it seemed better to put up with Garduña, and talk this matter of Cuevas and the girl over with him."

And as the ex-Royal Butler made his plans, he would never have dreamed that the pair of lovers he sought were peacefully asleep on the top floor of a building only a few doors away, where don Cristobal had lodged them in his quarters at the Three Wise Men.

CHAPTER III

"WHEN I AM KING . . ."

Since his master was an early riser, it was barely dawn when Fernando left the garret chamber in which he had been sleeping with Lucero. His companion in flight still lay motionless on her mattress, with no other signs of life than a fitful breathing. Her feet were still wrapped in the vinegar-soaked cloths, with which Fernando, aided by a maid of the inn, had bandaged them the night before. And the treatment had seemed to relieve Lucero's pain—she had soon fallen into a sleep that was more like the coma of an invalid than healthy slumber. Cuevas thought he would not awaken her till noon-time, when the inn-keeper would call them to their midday meal. She deserved the rest after that terrible journey, poor thing! And he tiptoed from the room, to present himself at his master's door on the second floor of the tavern.

Don Cristobal was walking up and down in his bedroom, a little book in his hand. He was performing his morning devotions. The boy's attendance seemed to annoy him. No, he had no orders to give! He was waiting for the man who had made the trip with him from Granada.

"I told him to look around for a mule! We need one for you and your brother—something that will serve for the rest of the trip, but good enough to sell again without loss when we get to Niebla! You might wait down-

stairs till he comes. If I need you later on I will call!"

Fernando had never been in Cordoba before, and he took his seat on the wall bench near the tavern door, gazing up and down the street with the curiosity inspired by a strange environment. The bells of the *Iglesia Mayor* and other churches were ringing for early morning mass; and hurrying thither down the street came women and young ladies, such as he knew in his home town, their black shawls drawn across their faces in Moorish style so as to show only one of their great round eyes that roved provokingly and interestedly about; old dowagers with hooked noses and wrinkled dusky skins; gentlemen of cape and sword striding majestically along, with rosaries of great beads dangling prominently from their scabbards.

Behind the wives and daughters of these pompous notables walked the inevitable Moorish slave girls, each carrying the little pillows on which their mistresses knelt in church. From the direction of the market came men and women with baskets full of bread, vegetables, meat; while others, riding horses or mules, were journeying in from the outlying farm lands to sell the produce of their gardens.

Cuevas was soon to be joined by a companion who could give him a less distant introduction to the mysteries of the strange faces of this wondrous city. The fat, good-natured proprietor of the inn, Anton Buenosvinos, was wont to take the sun each morning at the door of his tavern, where he was most likely to encounter native prominents and such transients as were in town. He had learned the evening before that Fernando and the latter's brother were in service with don Cristobal—there was no particular point, therefore, in further question as to their affairs—but for Cuevas he could

feel that sense of superiority which the well-informed native has over the perfect stranger, and he was only too ready to impress the young man with the number and importance of his passing acquaintances.

The inn-keeper's forehead almost touched the ground before a tall corpulent, dark-skinned individual, who came walking gravely by dressed in a long silk robe that reached his ankles, and surrounded by a group of people, men and women, who were all talking at once in an effort to attract the great man's attention.

"One at a time, please," the magnate admonished with a kindly smile. "There will be an opportunity for all of you! It's only fair to begin with the patients nearest at hand!"

"That is Gabriel the Physician," said Buenosvinos, with sincere enthusiasm, as the company moved on. "The greatest man in Cordoba, and in the whole world! He is as famous as my wines! There you have him at this early hour, surrounded by throngs of poor people, who are quarrelling for his services and imploring him to visit their sick. Well, if he can't cure them, nobody can . . . And he never takes a cent, except from the rich! There's a man for you! And he lives just below here! We're proud to have him in our quarter!"

Doctor Acosta's name was not unfamiliar to Fernando. Lucero had talked of him at the time of their flight from Andujar, as her mother's physician, and as someone, their sole connection out in the great world, to whom they might appeal if worse came to worst. He was the only person in Cordoba whose name they knew, and they would surely have gone to him, had they not chanced to meet don Cristobal on the road!

But at his particular age Fernando preferred men of the sword to sages of world-wide renown for learning;

and at a nudge from Buenosvinos his eyes turned with envious delight upon a young cavalier, who was approaching along the street, in a velvet cap, his cape folded over his arm and with a certain youthful and not unattractive insolence in his bearing.

"You are up betimes for your walk this morning, don Alonso de Ojeda!" said Buenosvinos in good-humored jest. "The air of this street seems to suit your fancy! Indeed may it bring you all the happiness which I wish your Worship!"

The gentleman, as Cuevas noted, was a finely proportioned man, not much taller than he himself, though perhaps four years older, but strong, sturdy, his limbs and muscles so harmoniously knit together that he really seemed much older than his years and much larger than his actual size. Barely twenty, don Alonso, as Fernando learned, was already gentleman, knight, and soldier, and not only a soldier, but a soldier home from a war! How humble, he himself, just a poor page, worthy at the most of gazing at a distance upon one of the heroes who had whipped the Moors!

Here, for Buenosvinos was another "greatest man in the world," with whom he was proud to exchange greetings.

"He comes from a noble family of Cuenca, and is first cousin to the Venerable Father Alonso de Ojeda, Grand Inquisitor of Spain. However, he is one of the Duke's cadets."

Cuevas understood the allusion. In those days, there were no military academies for apprentices in the art of war. Young men, unable to find places in the household of the King, were trained in the castles of powerful lords, who could often muster small armies of such budding warriors. The Duke of Medina-Coeli could respond

with several thousand men whenever the Monarchs asked his aid against the Moors. Young Alonso de Ojeda, as Buenosvinos related, had been fighting the Granadans since he was fifteen years old, his boyish feats attracting smiles and headshakes of astonished approval from his elders in arms.

"A little fellow, as you saw, but without an equal, whatever the weapon! The best horseman in the realm, and unbeatable with the lance. Nothing can scare him, and he likes a quarrel. But if he always strikes the first blow, he is the first also to forgive and forget. Gallant and skilful as he is in the saddle, he is a first-class soldier on his feet, and a wonderful fencer. He is as strong as he is tireless, but it's his quickness of foot, hand, and brain that wins for him."

True to his Andalucian origins, Buenosvinos had to resort to hyperbole to express to the full his admiration for the young hero.

"You might think he had two hands like any other good Christian! Not at all, he has a hundred, he has a thousand, when it's a question of exchanging blows. He's the terror of his enemies. Many a man has drawn his iron, thinking it a question of one man and a small one at that, and so it is, that far! But the moment swords are crossed, don Alonso becomes two, three, a dozen, every one of them a devil; and each attacking in a way of his own and with a speed of his own. It's soon over! The best of them give up or take to their heels!"

Stopping a moment to catch his breath, Buenosvinos continued: "They tell a story about him, and it's a true one, as everybody knows. One day the Queen climbed the tower of the Iglesia Mayor of Seville, and this boy was with her as a page. Did you ever see the Giralda? It's a tower so high, that when you look down from the top,

a man on the ground is about as big as a rabbit. Well, that day they had run a beam some twenty feet out from the top of the tower. And what does this young fellow do to amuse the Queen, but jump up on it and walk out to the end, as though he were out for a jaunt on the street. When he got to the end of it, he kicked up with one foot, whirled on his other heel and walked back again, with never so much as trace of fear or dizziness! The Queen and her damsels were screaming with fright. Some day when you are in Seville, take a look at that tower, and your flesh will creep just to think of such a thing! . . . When they came down, that day—to give you some idea of how strong this boy is in his arms—he put his left foot against the tower, and threw an orange as high as the bells!"

The inn-keeper lowered his voice:

"If he weren't such a good Christian and own cousin to a Grand Inquisitor of Spain, you'd think the devil had something to do with his luck. Otherwise, why should he be so terrible in a fight, no matter what the odds, and how can you explain so much strength in such a small man? However, he is very devoted to Our Lady, swears by Her Blessed Name whenever he loses his temper, and likes to be known as the 'Knight of the Virgin.' All the same you can't help wondering why a boy like him, who is always getting into fights where blood is drawn, has never yet been scratched in one of them!"

A sudden association seemed to work in the brain of the worthy hosteler:

"Come to think of it, he's a close friend of your master, don Cristobal, though don Cristobal is old enough to be this boy's father. They became acquainted through the Duke, who took your master into his service

and gave him bed and board for a time, in the days when he was known as 'Don Out-at-Elbows.' They say it happened this way. The Duke came to Court for some matter connected with the war in Granada, and brought don Cristobal with him, so that he could talk about his plans to people of importance. Well, some of the young knights at Court caught sight of don Cristobal one day as he was going along the street looking as hungry as a student of theology, and they began to make fun of his clothes, also calling him a lunatic because of his ideas about geography. Don Alonso de Ojeda happened to be there, and he up and slaps the face of the one who was talking loudest. Swords came out, and there would have been blood on the ground had not some of the cooler ones interfered. Don Cristobal told me the story himself with tears of gratitude in his eyes, and he can't say enough in praise of the young fellow."

As the inn-keeper sang the glories of the young warrior, Cuevas's eyes followed the progress of the velvet cap on its way down the street, though what he most remembered as the youth passed was the haughty arrogant expression of his face, which seemed somehow to compensate for his slightness of frame and stature. Don Alonso's manner, his carriage, his costume, and now what Cuevas had just been told of his glories, had already made him in the poor page's eyes a compendium of all the grandeurs attainable to men. How Cuevas wished it had been don Alonso and not don Cristobal who had encountered him on the roadside! Though at once a thought of Lucero came to console him! Perhaps then it was just as well to have an older man for a master, after all!

But the velvet cap stopped, at the end of the street, and Cuevas could see that the gallant don Alonso was

examining the grating on the lower windows of the house there.

"That's lawyer Herboso's house," the inn-keeper explained. "Herboso is a very important man, a friend of the Monarchs. Everybody stands attention when he speaks—even the Lord Mayor of Cordoba. But I don't like him much. I prefer men like Doctor Gabriel. And as between the lawyer and don Alonso, well, I am for don Alonso!"

There was trouble in the Herboso household, Buenosvinos went on to explain. Doña Isabelita, as he called her, a girl of a shy yielding exterior, which however dissembled something of her father's disposition, would have nothing of a match which her father was proposing; and her passive resistance was arousing the wrath of the vigorous and rough-handed jurisconsult who was wont to impose his own will in his own house as inexorably as he sustained the King's law elsewhere. In the lawyer's eyes, don Alonso de Ojeda may have been a hero as long as the war lasted; but now that the war was over, he was blessed only with a few connections through relatives in the Church. Perhaps his very respect for the law inspired in Herboso a certain prejudice of caste against this youthful and impetuous man of the sword whose name invariably figured in every notable disturbance of the public peace. To a mutual friend who was pressing the young man's suit, Herboso had once remarked:

"This young fellow likes to fight for the sake of fighting—it isn't for any honor or profit that may come of it. Well, that's not the kind of husband I want for my girl. She's entitled to something better!"

"Don Alonso, for his part," continued Buenosvinos, "finally lost patience and now openly voices his con-

tempt for the old man, and displays in public his disregard for the precautions Herboso is taking to prevent him from communicating with doña Isabel. The girl's mother is dead, you know; so Herboso has put her in charge of some old ladies of the family, who keep an eye on her every time she walks to a window, and never leave her alone when she goes to Church or to call on friends. This doesn't prevent don Alonso from standing guard in front of the house, as you see him doing now. The lawyer breathed a sigh of relief when the boy was called away this last time to the front. But now Granada has fallen, and he's in town again, waiting his chance for a word with the young lady. He knows she loves him. What he doesn't know, perhaps, is that Herboso is not an easy man to trifle with. If anyone is likely to draw the first blood from this young man, it's the old fox, Herboso. Oh, he couldn't do it in a fair fight, you understand. But there are other ways, when you know them. And a man with Herboso's brains is likely to know them!"

Buenosvinos attributed don Alonso's courage to the belief he had in his own star. Ojeda, to be sure, was a good Christian, but like most men of his time, he placed full trust in fortune-tellers. And he had been told by one of them that he was not to die of a wound in battle. That explained his recklessness in the many fights he fought.

"It was one of those old witches, with skins like shoe leather," the inn-keeper explained. "They call them 'gypsies.' They go around with their men, in caravans, mending pots and pans. Well, don Alonso had a friend, of whom he was very fond, a young gentleman named don Diego de Nicuesa. Another one, like don Alonso—horses, swords, girls, though he isn't quite so noisy as

the other! They are not good friends now—doña Isabel had something to do with it—they both knew her. It was a wonder knives didn't settle the point! However, they decided to go off to war, each his own way, to serve God and Their Highnesses! Now I imagine Nicuesa is living on his estate. But what I was going to say—the old woman I spoke of told Nicuesa he was going to die at sea! Which goes to show! A man owns a fine property in Castile, and has a place as steward at Court, and he is going to die at sea! And what did she say to don Alonso? She takes a look at his hand, and she says: 'You're going to die of starvation, some day!' What nonsense! Don Alonso is poor and all that, but a man as handy with a sword as he is is not going to die for lack of a dinner in this country!"

But don Alonso was coming back up the street! There was a suggestion of resolution in his gait, and he seemed to be making for the hotel. Buenosvinos stepped forward to anticipate his orders but Cuevas could still make out that they were talking of his master.

"I heard he came in last evening at vespers," said Ojeda. "I should like to have a word with him!"

The inn-keeper motioned toward Fernando.

"This boy is his servant—he has another one, a little younger, upstairs in bed."

Cuevas shrank, inwardly, as he saw the great warrior's eyes move in his direction. At the same time he was prouder than he could tell of such attention from so wonderful a person. He rose from his bench and made a bow.

Buenosvinos, however, was eager to be pleasing to the young knight, and would not allow Cuevas to carry the message to don Cristobal. He would show don Alonso to the gentleman's room himself!

Ojeda started through the door, but turned around, when he had reached the top of the steps, and seemed to be studying the embarrassed page, who, for his part, was gazing after him in a veritable trance of admiration:

"You seem to be a likely sort of boy," Ojeda said, "the kind a man could rely on to do an errand well without talking too much!"

Fernando, blushing, embarrassed, stood stupidly, cap in hand, able only to nod in gratitude for this unexpected approval from a hero—he would do his best!

Don Alonso came down the steps and pointed to the last house on the street, the house which Cuevas had learned to be the residence of lawyer Herboso. There was not much to do! Cuevas was to walk up and down in front of it, trying not to attract attention, if he saw one or more of the old women at any of the windows. Sooner or later a little Moorish girl would show herself.

"When she does," said Ojeda, "you just step up and, in an offhand manner, as naturally as possible, you hand her this!"

And don Alonso gave Cuevas a piece of paper, folded several times, that it might fit into a closed hand.

In view of the sacrifices he would have been willing to make for such a grand personage as this wonderful hidalgo, Cuevas thought the task assigned him very simple indeed. With another deep bow before don Alonso he walked off down the street, pretending to take no interest whatever in the lordly mansion of the lawyer Herboso, though all his eyes were fixed upon it. Several times he walked up and down past the gratings on the ground floor. No one! So he ventured to draw nearer. And at last, sure enough, he caught sight, at a safe distance within the room, of the dusky face, the black eyes, the heavy joined eyebrows of a tiny Moorish girl.

The slave shrank back in fright as, suddenly, he stepped up to the window directly toward her.

"Here, here!" he called, softly. "For you! From don Alonso!"

The girl smiled and came forward; her little hand darted out between the bars of the grating; and the missive was hers so rapidly that no one could have observed what was taking place. As Fernando turned away he caught sight of another girlish face on the other side of the grating, an oval of soft white, marked by two large bluish eyes, two folds of smooth, shining chestnut hair falling to either side of the forehead, and between them, a triangle of white skin centered about a sparkling jewel, which, in its turn, hung from the little gold chain that girdled her brow like a crown.

So this must have been doña Isabel, the girl who had brought don Alonso back to Cordoba to face the wrath of the powerful jurist! And young Cuevas stopped in his tracks, dazzled by the beautiful apparition. For the first time in his life this son of a poor widow of Andujar had caught sight of a lady of the upper classes in her home costume, without the veil that hid the faces of Spanish women on the streets. He saw the letter pass from the little slave girl to the mistress as rapidly and as dexterously as he had delivered it himself! And it reminded him of the dangers of his errand. He might be seen by the master or some servant of the house! So he bowed courteously to doña Isabel, and was away up the street toward the tavern of Buenosvinos.

The tavern keeper was waiting for him at the door with an urgent order from don Cristobal. It was a question of carrying news of the latter's arrival in Cordoba to a woman named Beatrice Enriquez de Arana who

lived in a street in one of the most crowded sections of the city.

Cuevas started out with a few directions from Buenosvinos, but relying on the help of passersby whenever he felt in danger of going wrong. It was at just such a moment, at a perplexing crossing of streets, that he was about to question two men who were approaching, both gentlemen, evidently, since they carried swords, but one of them dressed in the black costume worn by all agents of justice.

Fortunately they were engaged in animated conversation and did not notice Cuevas, who for his part, at sight of the minister of the law, stepped aside hurriedly into the open portal of a building close at hand. The precaution was even luckier than he thought, for in one of the two men he recognized that same Pero Gonzalez who he thought was in Andujar and whom he had hit with a stone a few days before!

The men paused for a moment at the crossing, without however looking in through the door into which Cuevas had fled. The page was able to hear a fragment of what the ex-Royal Butler was saying to his companion:

"A general alarm has been sent out to the squads of the Brotherhood. A lookout will be kept in all the towns of the South. It is our business to find out whether they are here; and once we lay hands on them . . . the boy especially . . ."

Divining that these menacing words referred to himself and to Lucero, Cuevas waited, his heart in his mouth, till the two men had gone on. Then he stole cautiously from his refuge and resumed his hunt for the obscure address in this great and unknown town.

Eventually he chanced upon some women who were able to direct him straight to the house he was looking for—a cheap dwelling of a single story, the black eaves and gables extending far out over the street, the floor within of bare earth tamped hard with irons. There he found Beatrice Enriquez de Arana, a young woman, unquestionably beautiful in spite of tangled hair which showed she had just arisen from bed, and in spite of a frayed wrapper which bespoke relative poverty. She seemed to be busy setting her house in order for the day, trying meanwhile to attend to a child a few years old who was seated on the floor playing with a cat. The news that the young man's master, don Cristobal, was in Cordoba, and that he was expecting her at the sign of the "Three Wise Men" was a joyous shock to the young woman; and as Cuevas withdrew he could see her standing silent and erect in the door of the cottage looking after him as though she could hardly believe it true.

In that brief moment, in fact, Beatrice Enriquez lived over again in memory the most interesting period of her humble life. She saw herself as she had been seven years before, a girl not yet twenty but adding to the natural charms of youth the rare distinction of being one of the few blue-eyed blondes in that land of Andalucia where most women have black hair and black eyes.

Though she used the name of her mother's family by preference, Beatrice was actually a member of the Arana clan, which had come down from the North some generations before to make war on the Moors. The branches of the Arana family had encountered varied fortunes. There were Aranas of wealth and titled nobility; there were Aranas who had declined to very lowly station. Beatrice was one of the latter. Her parents were both dead, and her only cousin, one Pedro de Arana, had

become a plain seaman in the Royal Navy sailing the Mediterranean in the service of Their Highnesses against the Moors.

Buenosvinos, the inn-keeper, had been a friend of Beatrice's father; and now that the latter was dead, he looked after the girl, in a way, employing her as waitress and maid at the tavern on days of heavy patronage. The truth was that the wily tavern keeper had his eye on two vineyards, tiny but of exceptionally good grapes, which had come to the girl by inheritance. Buenosvinos hoped some day to buy the land, which meantime furnished the Enriquez woman with a pittance, and enabled her, with what she could earn by working, to live in the inexpensive manner customary among the laboring classes of the region. The girl, furthermore, was an asset to the tavern. Gay, lighthearted, witty, attractive in appearance, graceful in movement, she was a favorite with all the customers of the inn, laughing and joking with everyone, though protecting her dignity as a woman with a certain aggressive and combative good-nature if anyone ventured to go too far with word or gesture. Neat of person and dress, Beatrice had a veritable passion for flowers, which she always wore in her hair or on her breast, filling any room where she happened to be with the fragrance of an Andalucian garden.

It may have been the misfortunes of her own family which created in Beatrice Enriquez de Arana an instinctive sympathy for the dignified reserve and the respectable poverty of Master Cristobal, the least pretentious of all the guests of the tavern. Buenosvinos, as a matter of fact, was the only person in all Cordoba who gave the title of captain to this man whom others were likely to call "Don Out-at-Elbows." The inn-keeper knew of the

sailor's relations with the famous doctor Acosta and of his frequent invitations to Court. These things greatly impressed Buenosvinos and inclined him to sufficient deference toward this notorious dreamer to indulge occasionally in a word of half jesting flattery.

"Captain," he would say, "when Their Highnesses give you the boats you want, I hope you will take me with you to see this Mr. Khan of Tartary you keep talking about. I am sure he will enjoy a taste of my wine—and I can bring the bags back full of gold."

Buenosvinos thought of taking a trip westward to Asia about as seriously as of turning Mohammedan!

Toward Beatrice, "señor" Cristobal, as she called him, was ever kind and courteous of speech. His tranquil smile reminded her of an expression she had often noticed in the pictures of saints in the churches. She was fascinated also by certain work he did in his room. Master Cristobal was an expert draughtsman and supplemented what he made by peddling printed books with the sale of maps and marine charts which he drew himself. Meantime for his own amusement he was making a "Map of All the Known World" on a great piece of canvas. Beatrice was the only person in the tavern who took an interest in this creation, and she would often go up to Master Cristobal's room to watch him as he worked on this mysterious diagram which was to serve as a guide to mariners lost on the great moving plane of the Sea of Darkness. Like most girls of her station, Beatrice could read but slowly and write with even greater difficulty; but this did not prevent a whole fantastic world from opening up before her hungry eyes as she watched the strong but delicate fingers of the mapmaker in their movements over the canvas. The names which she could spell out, letter by letter, brought before

her mind all the poetry of distant countries, all the majesty of unknown seas, all the multi-colored splendors of Far Eastern cities, and they would sing a strange mysterious music in her ears, as she would stand there at Master Cristobal's side, one knee on a stool, her elbows on the table, her chin in her hands, while her eyes would attentively follow the lines that flowed from the pen of the draughtsman.

In the middle of the Great Ocean "señor Cristobal" had drawn a many pointed star to indicate the directions of the various winds. The circle where its arms united was to contain a miniature of the Virgin holding the Infant Jesus in Her arms. The figures had been drawn in outline, though the face of the Celestial Lady was left vague and vapory—the features would be filled in at the last moment, when the artist had completed his work. To the left of the Ocean, came a confusion of islands, some of them close together, others standing all by themselves, pieces that the storms might have broken off from the continent sketched behind them. The "captain" must have been inventing this part of the map—he was continually changing it, making new islands and different ones.

But over on the right, everything was clear—at least after it had been explained to her. Here was Spain, the cities represented by little castles each topped with a flag that lay stiff and rigid on the canvas and bore a coat of arms. Here Cordoba! Farther up Toledo! Madrid! Down here, Granada, and on its small red castle señor Cristobal had raised a flag with a cross as though it already belonged to the Catholic Sovereigns! Still farther to the right, Italy; and Rome was a throne with the Pope seated on it, a pointed tiara with three diadems on his head. Through Central Europe, instead of

castles, a sprinkling of kings, in crowns and beards! But what interested her most was the extreme right of the map, that seemed to be cut off short, the missing ends to be found peering over the edge of the extreme left. All that was Orient, the enormous Asia, at its farthest limits, Cathay and Cipango!

It began really with Constantinople, which belonged now, through some incomprehensible disposition of the Almighty, to the Grand Turk. Here there were three little people, on horseback, with flowing robes, and followed by pages on foot: the Three Wise Men, bearing gifts for the infant God, incense, gold, and myrrh, out of the East! Here again, the deserts of Arabia—four camels in line, a caravan, a terrestrial fleet, crossing seas of sand! The boats that were plying the gulfs of India had sails like Christian vessels, but their flags were different—they were decorated with fanciful beasts. But beyond that! Yes, away over there, the glorious East, those realms which señor Cristobal was to reach some day! A castle bigger than any castle in Europe represented Cambalù, the residence of the Grand Khan; and another of the same size farther along was Kinsay, the city of the twelve thousand marble bridges! The rich province of Mangui, the most opulent in all Cathay, was too large to go all to the right of the map. It reappeared as a point on the left, and the point aimed straight at an enormous island: Cipango! Cipango looked like a hen with a great brood of chickens—five thousand islands between great and small. Señor Cristobal did not take the trouble to outline them all distinctly, but was careful, following his geographical convictions, to thrust many of them far out into the Ocean. The most advanced seemed almost to reach the Azores, Madeira and the Canaries. They would be the ones he

would sight first, if Their Highnesses gave him the money to make his voyage!

Sometimes Beatrice would take her eyes from the map to gaze at its maker and compare his gray, almost white hair with his strong sunburned face, the skin somewhat wrinkled about the eyes but still fresh and youthful on the cheeks. At such times he would seem to her much younger than at other hours of the day, and there would in truth be a new light gleaming in the pupils of the mariner's eyes surrounded by irises that were blue like hers. The silent admiration of this girl was balm to the lonely spirit of the adventurer. In his poverty and solitude Beatrice brought just that spark of faith and enthusiasm which it is a woman's privilege to furnish to a man; and it would not have been difficult for anyone to see that Love was making his way into this universe of Delirious Geography!

Beatrice could observe that the evenings when Master Cristobal was invited out to dinner or was travelling somewhere in an effort to sell one of the books he kept in his baggage were times of sadness for her; and she would sit in the living room of the tavern, silent and frowning, waiting for his return. Master Cristobal, for his part, would have sudden bursts of gaiety. While busy at his work he would begin to sing tender love songs in Portuguese, or *salomas* in the jargon of the Mediterranean ports—chants invented by generations of sailors to set the rhythm for their hauls on their ropes. And all this music of the sea was like a celestial melody in the ears of the girl of Cordoba. One day the chartographer of the Winds, and Beatrice observed that She had blonde set to work completing the face of the Virgin in the Rose hair and blue eyes—a crude portrait of Beatrice herself, such as a designer who was not a painter might draw.

Señor Cristobal began, also, to have faith in the future, the rosy optimism of every man who falls in love! He was young again—everything was possible, everything was easy!

The time was fast approaching when the Royal Commission appointed to examine Master Cristobal's project was to meet in Cordoba, and the enamored mariner was talking of the lands of the Grand Khan as though he had already reached and conquered them. Beatrice, the only person in the world with a sympathetic ear, saw herself transformed into a great lady, richer than any of the dames of Queen Isabel's court. Yes, she would be "doña Beatriz," sitting in a golden templet on the back of an elephant, covered with pearls from head to foot, with little bronze-skinned dwarfs to carry the train of her robe and others to walk before her waving feathery fans!

But then again his imaginative eloquence would suddenly break off, and after a pause he would conclude sadly:

"No, Beatrice, we are dreaming! You will remain here in Cordoba, and marry some good young man of the neighborhood. For each his own! You are a mere child, I, an old man! We met each other too late in life!"

On the day when the Commission assembled and Doctor Acosta, with the approval of other learned scientists, demonstrated the absurdity of believing that Asia was as close to the coast of Europe as the Genoese promoter believed, Beatrice restrained herself from going to the tavern in the afternoon, fearing that she might learn the unhappy truth. At the same time, she needed to know, to free herself from her anxiety which would give her no rest.

It was dark when she reached the sign of "The Three

Wise Men," and on learning that the "Captain" was already in his room, she darted hastily up the stairs. She halted on a wooden balcony that opened on the inner court near the door of señor Cristobal's miserable room. Through the rectangular space that marked the entrance came the flickering light of a wax taper set in a plain tin candlestick. Inside, at one end of the table, rolled up and tossed aside, was the great map of the World which she admired so much; at the other end, the top of a man's head, the forehead resting in an open hand, the latter girt at the wrist by the frayed hem of a coat sleeve.

Master Cristobal raised his eyes on becoming aware of the girl's presence. They were filled with an expression of humility and discouragement. There was a crystal-like glitter about the pupils. Tears!

Beatrice too could hardly restrain her sobs. The man of the Grand Khan, the haughty and triumphant conqueror of the day before had become "Don Out-at-Elbows" again!

The girl stepped resolutely into the room, throwing about the poor man's shoulders a pair of soft youthful arms, wrapping him tenderly about in a violent burst of protecting affection:

"Oh, my poor captain! My poor little boy!"

And she kissed him, on the lips.

Thereafter, the life of this indefatigable searcher after new paths across the Ocean, of this strange and complex person made up of many different individualities, took on a new aspect. Master Cristobal continued still to think of the realms of the Grand Khan; but his enthusiasms as a discoverer yielded a little to other thoughts, giving more room to the sensuous spirit in him, to the personality which delighted in all the

beauties and enjoyments of Nature. This man of the sea had been a pirate along the shores of Portugal and a slave trader on the coasts of Guinea (so at least Doctor Acosta and others asserted). At the same time he had a woman's passion for flowers, jewels, perfumes. His affable and contained exterior really concealed a harsh and wrathful temper. Here now, Youth and Love were coming forward to meet him along his path at a time when he thought such encounters had passed forever. He was beginning a second boyhood with a head covered with white hair! This blue-eyed orphan girl of Cordoba was the joy and the embellishment of a new life for him!

It was a chaste love, for a long time. Beatrice stoutly resisted the advances of a sailor accustomed to all the waywardness of the great ports. But finally a friar known as Father Deza who was very influential at Court (he was later to become a bishop) called Master Cristobal away to Salamanca, where the Sovereigns were in residence at the time. The months of separation and loneliness which followed filled the girl of Cordoba with an intenser passion; and when her lover returned, she had no restraints for him, coming even, after a few weeks of absorbing intimacy to conceive the desire of all women in love, a house for herself apart from others, a refuge which would have no other memories than those of her love.

Beatrice and Master Cristobal went to live in a small cottage which belonged to one of the girl's aunts, known as señora Mayor-Enriquez, furnishing its two rooms with articles borrowed from various individuals of the Arana clan. The Genoese mariner had promised to marry Beatrice, and all her relatives closed their eyes to the irregular situation in which she was now placed. She, the woman in the partnership, was the real purvey-

or of the house and its equipment; and the Aranas even contributed money for the maintenance of the new household, since the sailor-lover obtained but a scanty allowance from Court and this at very uncertain intervals.

When Beatrice had a son (he was baptized as Fernando), the Aranas lost their temper.

"When are you going to get married?" asked the aunt, señora Mayor Enriquez, angrily. "Here now you have been living in mortal sin for three years and more!"

Master Cristobal replied that he was waiting for the papers necessary for the ceremony. The papers never came! Beatrice began to suspect that her lover's first wife was still living in Portugal. Suddenly he announced that he was going to Lisbon, and the young girl thought she was never to see him again. He explained the journey by saying that the King of Portugal had again expressed interest in his plans. The real reason was probably the death of the first wife.

This departure was really the end of Beatrice's happiness with the father of her child. On returning to Cordoba, Master Cristobal seemed to have soured in temper. The disparity between his premature old age and the youthful gaiety and freshness of the Andalucian blonde made itself more and more apparent every day. There were quarrels, motivated for the most part by the sailor's jealousy. Finally, he went off again, this time to the Royal Encampment at Santa Fé, before the walls of the besieged Granada.

From time to time Beatrice received indirect news of Master Cristobal, though she feared he would never appear again. She heard of his final break with the Sovereigns, caused by his excessive demands for honors and wealth, in case he should succeed with his voyage. On leaving Court in failure, he had gone to Seville to get

Diego, his elder son by his Portuguese wife, whom Beatrice did not even know. It was as though it had never occurred to him to come to Cordoba—he seemed to have forgotten her and their child. She had been told he was on his way to France to offer his project there and in other countries. Later on she had heard that the friars of La Rabida, near Huelva, had again placed him in connection with Their Highnesses, that he had become "don Cristobal," that he had been granted all the honors and emoluments which he had long demanded in vain as reward for a successful arrival on the coasts of the Grand Khan. And now suddenly, here was this handsome young man of such courteous address who announced himself as page and valet to the former "Don Out-at-Elbows," and begged to inform her that the future Admiral of the Ocean Sea was waiting for her at the tavern of "The Three Wise Men"!

Could it be really true? Was not, rather, her whole life story a dream? Thinking back to the days of the Map of All the Known World, she could again see herself as an Oriental queen, mounted on an elephant, covered with jewels, and with a retinue of Asiatic pages —everything that the strange mariner had promised her on those evenings of their young love!

However, the fact of the moment was this important visit. She hurriedly closed the door of her cottage and began to dress herself and her child with all the care and splendor that the call from "Don Cristobal" required.

Young Cuevas, meantime, had made his way back to the tavern of "The Three Wise Men," fearing at every step to encounter anew the ex-Royal Butler and the agent of the Brotherhood. However he reached the inn without adventure, finding don Cristobal in the hallway

on the first floor in conversation with don Alonso de Ojeda. Don Cristobal was on his way to hear Mass in the Iglesia Mayor, and the valorous young *hidalgo* was attending him for part of the way, that they might continue the conversation they had begun. As Fernando appeared, don Alonso glanced at him inquiringly without interrupting his talk with don Cristobal. The page replied with a slight nod and a smile that was intended to reveal that the errand had been successfully done.

The two gentlemen marched side by side down the stairs, pressing on the hilts of their swords to keep the chapes from dragging on the steps. Cuevas caught a few words of what they were saying.

"Just where is this Port of Palos from which you intend to sail? I never heard of the place. Is it somewhere near Niebla?"

Don Cristobal must have replied with a nod, for Ojeda at once resumed:

"You will be leaving tomorrow; but I must stay here for some days to attend to certain matters of more or less importance . . ! But I will join you in Palos within the month. I am tired of being poor, don Cristobal. Here now the war is over, and what can soldiers like me do to get an honest living? When a fight starts now, it's an affair for the lawyers! . . ."

This last reflection obliged him to pause to gulp down his contempt. Then he added:

"I have read a few books myself. I liked especially the story of Alexander the Great and how he conquered India. He must have died somewhere near where you intend to strike by sailing out into the West. Let's go, don Cristobal! Let us make our try at wealth and power! God grant that you may become an emperor at least, an emperor as great and powerful as the Grand Khan

of Tartary. But don't forget me, will you? In all the kingdoms you will have at your disposal, you can surely find one, not too large . . . but not too small . . . where I can try my hand at being king for a while, myself! . . ."

CHAPTER IV

CAPE AND SWORD

With Hernandico dressed in his Sunday clothes, Beatrice proceeded to her own attire, drawing a waist over her breasts and arms still damp from recent ablutions, putting on a skirt tight about the knees and broad and loose about the hips, as was the style of the epoch, touching her eyes and lips with the delicate tints and colors which coquetry knew how to find in the shops of the Moors of Cordoba for days of festival, and finally throwing over her blonde hair a blue mantilla with a silver fringe. Then she took her little boy by the hand, and went out into the street closing the door behind her.

The unexpected appearance of her lover had affected her deeply. For a moment she wavered in her confidence. The sailor, after the rapid change in his fortunes, might find her aged and no longer attractive. But then she smiled. Here were men coming along the street; and the glances they gave her, the gallant compliments the more venturesome whispered as she passed, assured her that she was still far from her day of decadence. She was indeed only twenty-four, and her exuberant youthfulness, her lines gracefully rounded by motherhood, gave her body the fragrant colorful sumptuousness of a luscious fruit of summertime.

Never had Buenosvinos received her so cordially at the door of his inn. There was something deferential

about his first words, as though part of the importance which Their Highnessess had just conferred on the once "master" and now "don" Cristobal were reflected somehow upon her. The tavern keeper was in the best of good humors since "the Captain," mindful of kindnesses in the days of his poverty, had chosen to lodge at "The Three Wise Men," selecting the best room in the house. It was a large chamber, the woodwork painted white, two designs in tapestry on the walls to either side of a crucifix, and furnished with a number of chairs in red cordoba, and a bed with Moorish curtains. It was there that Beatrice saw her "man" again. There was a moment of diffidence. He was not the same person: he had grown older—his hair was now altogether white; but he was taller, perhaps because he now held himself more stiffly erect, without that droop at the shoulders which used to come from the long hours he spent reading or drawing. And he had a different bearing—masterful, self-assured, imperious, as though henceforward he were to command and all about him were to obey.

His clothes especially caught the girl's eye. It was the costume of a Court grandee—an embroidered coat, hose of finest wool, slippers of rich cordoba. A sword hung at his belt even indoors—now he was a captain of the King! And a necklace hung down over his chest, a double string of amber beads! Many a time she had heard him express a yearning for this costly adornment harmonious with his love of perfumes, and lament the poverty which deprived him of it. The moment he had received a payment in advance on the sum that Santangel was to place at his disposal at the bank of his partner Pinedo of Seville, he had hastened to satisfy this capricious hankering. Henceforth on board ship when the stench from the hold reached his nostrils he would have

only to bend his head to sense the eternal petrified perfume of oriental fir trees!

After a moment's hesitation Beatrice threw herself passionately into his arms, kissing him on the cheeks but without finding his lips. Reserved, dignified, don Cristobal gently repelled her caresses, controlling, after an instant's vacillation, the awakening of his senses. He seemed to be oblivious to Beatrice's presence, so wholly was he engrossed in the little child who had seized with both hands on his father's cloak. Don Cristobal lifted Hernandico from the floor and gazed at him admiringly, as though during the months of absence the child had undergone a great change. And change there had been, indeed! The little brat whom he had watched capering over the dirt floor of a cottage in an unfashionable quarter of Cordoba had suddenly risen in the world! If land came up out of the sea to the West, this boy would be a don like his father! No one could guess the titles and riches that might come to him before he had reached his 'teens!

While Beatrice seated herself before him on one of the leather chairs don Cristobal held Hernandico on his knees, his eyes glued upon him. The little fellow, entranced by the rich vestments, the fragrant necklace, the shining sword hilt of this man whom he had always seen about the house ill-dressed and sad, looked back at him timidly, without daring to speak. Beatrice also kept silent before the demeanor of haughty reserve in her lover which seemed to chill any impulsive affectionateness. Finally, with an effort, she ventured to stretch out her hands in search of his:

"Oh, Cristobal!"

She had never lost faith in his star! She had never doubted that one day or another the world would have

for him the admiration which she had felt though she had found him despised of men, his eyes wet with the tears of a lost hope! Her voice trembled with sincere love as she said these things; then it fell silent again, smothered under the chill aloofness of the great man!

At last, he deigned to speak, but as though he were a perfect stranger. He would never forget her! She was the mother of his child! But it would be useless to try and resurrect the past. He was long past his youth. The enterprise he now had in hand counseled him to forget forever the pleasant frivolities which some people call love. Love was for young folks—not for him! Besides, he had to keep himself in spotless purity, in a "state of grace," for the great labor he was about to undertake.

"God has designated me," he said solemnly, "to carry His Word to countless peoples of Asia who have been waiting vainly to hear it for long centuries!"

And to show that he had done with women in earnest, he seemed deliberately to ignore Beatrice for a time, devoting all his attention to his little one.

"Who knows what the future holds for you on the other side of the Ocean," he murmured softly, as though voicing unconsciously thoughts he had often expressed in secret. "Perhaps some day you will be king of a country bigger than Spain. Others have gone as far without doing half that much!"

Then, apparently repentant of his irreverance toward the Fortune that still might thwart him with the countless difficulties to be overcome, he set the little boy down, and Hernandico sought refuge at his mother's knee.

They talked for more than an hour, quietly, cordially, as though Beatrice were a lady from among his patrons who had honored him with a call. He talked, with the

agile restless imagination characteristic of a mind ready to grasp each new aspect of things, of all that he had to do at once to get started on his great emprise. The King and Queen were giving him money and authority! He still had to find boats, crews, and competent officers to second him! He had come to Cordoba just to see her and the little boy—he would be off again on the morrow for Seville! He had to kiss his Hernandico, who knows whether for the last time; and to talk with her about her future and that of the son! He trusted that God would vouchsafe him a safe return from the dangerous voyage. At any rate he was counting on devices which he had never chosen to reveal—he was certain he would not lose his way on the great Ocean! However, a man who set foot on a vessel could never be sure of a safe return! It might well be that this would be their last hour together!

"Oh, Cristobal!" sobbed Beatrice again, and she came toward him and threw her arms about him, the tears streaming from her eyes and falling upon his cheeks. He did not avoid the embrace, but held her in his arms a long time, the child gazing at them in wonderment. Gently, at last, don Cristobal pushed her from him toward her chair, and resumed talking.

He was sorry that before risking his life in this way he had never legalized to accord with Christian law the situation in which they found themselves. It was too late now—he could think only of boats and men! Perhaps . . . on his return!. . . . But whether she became his wife or not, she would be rich, very rich, and their son would be a great and powerful prince. The only thing in the past at all comparable to the wealth he would win was perhaps the fortune of Alexander, his one

true predecessor. Alexander had driven at the wealth of the Indies going East. His goal was the same, but by the West!

"Be it pleasing to God to protect me," he said, "and the riches of Alexander will be a bagatelle besides those I shall bring back to Their Highnesses."

He did not revert again to the matters which seemed to be on his mind at first, so enthralled was he in the future splendors of the life of which he now felt assured. He had dinner with Beatrice and Hernandico in the room where they were, served by the waitresses of the inn in order to give his two pages further opportunity to rest.

Lucero, in fact, had slept until midday on the sack of straw which had served as bed for herself and Fernando. She had barely time to wash herself at the courtyard well, the sole hygienic convenience of the menials of the tavern, when Cuevas came to get her to take her to the kitchens. There they ate, along with a company of servants and mule drivers, though they were served portions of the succulent meal which Buenosvinos had prepared for don Cristobal and his family. At the suggestion of Fernando, Lucero at once returned, after dinner, to their garret bedroom. Cuevas was still under the impression of the encounter he had had that morning on the streets; and though he said nothing of it to Lucero, he thought it wiser for her to keep out of sight. He himself, so he thought, could trust his own courage and lightness of foot to escape or find some hiding place, in case of another meeting with the man Gonzalez. Meantime it was better not to arouse suspicion by too obvious avoidance of people.

Fernando was sitting at the door of the inn when again don Alonso de Ojeda came down the street. Evi-

dently the young hidalgo had had his dinner and thought it time to appear once more under the windows of doña Isabelita. Cuevas stepped forward to meet him, smiling, cap in hand. The *hidalgo* likewise smiled on recalling the service the young man had done him that morning, and put a hand to his purse.

"Here, boy," he said, offering a coin of small value. "By the Virgin, I wish I could be more generous, but all good soldiers are poor these days, now that the Moors are done for!"

Cuevas declined the gratuity, and stammering with bashfulness explained to the valorous youth that he had done the favor for the pleasure of serving a man whom he admired so much, and that he would always be ready to do similar errands in case don Alonso should need his help. What he regretted was that he could not take regular service with Ojeda.

"No," the latter replied, "stay with the master you have—he is worth much more than I. But if you ever get into trouble, call on me. My wealth lies not in my purse but in my sword, and my sword is ever at the service of my friends!"

Fernando's eyes again followed the velvet cap as, rising and falling with each of don Alonso's strides, it made its way toward the mansion of the jurist Herboso. But they were rudely disturbed in their feast on such gallant splendor. Advancing along the street toward the inn came the former Royal Butler attended by the same gentleman in black.

Cuevas thought that he might attract attention as he rose from his seat and entered the inn, so he moved away from the two men down the street, stopping at another wall-bench on the corner, to be ready to run in case they had recognized him. From this vantage point he could

see that as the Butler and his companion stopped in the doorway of the tavern Buenosvinos came out to meet them, and stood in conversation with them for some time. Finally Gonzalez went into the house, leaving the agent of justice still talking with the inn-keeper.

The suspense was to last a full hour, Cuevas peering around the corner toward the inn in continual fear that his enemy had entered the house and found Lucero. At the same time he was reassured by the fact that the hotel showed no signs of excitement. The two men continued talking casually at the door—nothing, therefore, had arisen to call Buenosvinos inside. Finally, when God willed, the ex-Royal Butler himself appeared, exchanged a few more words with the master of the inn, and went back up the street again, taking his friend in black with him. Perhaps, after all, the visit had had nothing to do with the flight from Andujar. The hated *hidalgo* may have come to call on don Cristobal, or on some other guest at the inn.

As soon as they were out of sight, Cuevas sauntered indifferently up to the door of the tavern, above which hung a projecting sign bearing the painted portraits of the Three Wise Men. Buenosvinos could not repress, on catching sight of him, an exclamation which clearly showed some original purpose of the Butler's visit.

"What is your name, boy?" the inn-keeper asked.

Cuevas had been waiting for just that question and had his answer ready:

"Diego Alcañices."

"And the boy who is with you?"

"Pero Salcedo."

"Where did you come from?"

"From Osuna."

"Were you in Andujar last week?"

Cuevas denied that he had ever been at Andujar. The names he had given, without the slightest hesitation, were those of schoolmates at home. He could truly say that he came from Osuna, since that was the birth-place of his father, the dead squire.

Buenosvinos, talkative by nature, and a simple-minded soul without guile, given to putting all his thoughts into words, proceeded to recount the conversations he had had with the two men.

"The one in black," he said, "is a constable of the Brotherhood of Cordoba. Everyone calls him 'the Weasel!' For my part he is the kind of man I would have as little to do with as I can, though we inn-keepers have to stand in well with the agents of the Crown. The other one is a certain Pero Gonzalez—we all call him 'the Butler' because he held that position with Their Highnesses for a time. He is a skinflint from whom the Good Lord deliver us! I once borrowed a small sum from him, and I got out of his hands with my bare skin. Before that he lived, off and on, at the tavern, and we quarreled every pay day. He is sure everyone is cheating him, while it's he who clutches at every farthing he sets eyes on, getting it if he can by fair means or foul."

The inn-keeper, after a pause, could not refrain from imparting to another ear the occasion of the visit he had just received.

"It seems they are looking for a young fellow from Andujar, who has run away with a Jewish girl, daughter of a certain Cohen, with the idea, it would seem, of evading the royal edict against people of her race and beliefs. This man, Pero Gonzalez, has complained to the Inquisition in the matter in order to get the girl and lover put in jail. . . . For a moment I thought it might be you—the description of the lad fits you more or less.

But at your age one boy is like another. Besides, you are not with a girl—you are with a boy and he is your brother. . . .!"

Again he fell silent, as though hesitating to express his real thought; but then, with a shrug of the shoulders, he added:

"Anyhow, I am not going to borrow any trouble, either in this or any other case, for the sake of doing a favor to men like Garduña and the Butler. Let them attend to their own dirty affairs! But I can tell you, that boy from Andujar and the Jewess who is with him have made two very bad enemies. It won't take those customers long to find them! I understand warnings have been placed on the doors of the churches, with descriptions of the runaways; and tomorow morning the city herald will cry the same thing for the benefit of those who don't know how to read."

Cuevas did his best to control himself, that the inn-keeper might not become aware of his inner confusion and uneasiness. Buenosvinos continued:

"While Garduña was questioning me about the two fugitives, the Butler went upstairs to see don Cristobal. This Pero Gonzalez seems to be very much worked up over the Captain's voyage to the lands of the Grand Khan. He is anxious to join the expedition, hoping to bring back a dozen barrels full of gold, at least. I hope he goes, and may the Holy Angel of Cordoba see that he stays there, so that he won't be troubling honest folks at home again."

Some guests were calling Buenosvinos from the doorway of the tavern, and Fernando was left alone. The danger he was in seemed to give him a foolhardy courage, each new risk spurring him to an ever greater daring. To convince himself that the inn-keeper was telling the

truth, he stole cautiously down the street toward a church which he remembered as the seat of the local parish. There, in fact, he found many notices pasted to the walls near the portal, some of them yellowed by the weather, their ink blurred from the rains, but another, not very large but conspicuous from its whiteness, which showed that it must have been put up but a few hours before. An aged hidalgo, with cape and sword and a rosario dangling from his belt, was reading the notice, slowly, spelling out one word after another. Affecting indifference, Cuevas stopped at the old man's side, following with his eyes the words that the man was muttering. Buenosvinos had not exaggerated. The Lord High Constable of Cordoba bade everyone deny help and shelter to one Fernando Cuevas and a Jewess named Cohen, and to deliver them to the royal authorities in case they were discovered. The order for the arrest of Lucero was countersigned by the Inquisition, since her flight was in defiance of royal orders touching public worship.

This menacing document for the first time brought home to Fernando the dread prosecution of which he and the girl he loved were being made the object. He could see only one hope of escape. Fortunately don Cristobal intended to depart for the little seaside town called Palos as soon as possible, and, provided the driver who had accompanied him from Granada succeeded in finding a suitable mule, they were to leave with him for Seville the following morning. Cuevas thought it a good omen for the future, that on returning to the inn, the driver had already come with the mule and other minor purchases which don Cristobal had ordered. He ran up the stairs to the garret to talk things over with Lucero.

She too was in great alarm, though not from any encounter with the ex-Royal Butler, of whose presence in

Cordoba she had not been told. She had fled from the courtyard of the tavern to avoid the questions of Beatrice Enriquez, whose interest in her had caused her the greatest fright.

During Fernando's absence, she had felt the need of air and had decided to go down into the patio. There she had found Beatrice with the latter's child. Beatrice had had to withdraw for a time from don Cristobal's room because of an important visit from an acquaintance who had been of service to the Captain at Court.

Fernando paled with fear at the risk she had run by appearing in the *patio* at the very moment when Gonzalez was on the first floor of the tavern, only a few feet away, in conversation with don Cristobal!

Beatrice had taken advantage of the interval to talk with some of the women of the tavern with whom she had formerly worked. One of them, perhaps in jealousy, had pointed her out to Lucero.

"There is don Cristobal's girl, and the boy he had by her." For that matter there was nothing offensive in the remark, since concubinage was quite in the manners of the time, and the Genoese adventurer's relation with Beatrice was something known to all, accepted by all, and sanctioned, in a way, by its long standing.

Others meantime had told Beatrice that Lucero was in don Cristobal's service as page and valet, and the Arana woman had called to her with a certain tone of authority to which she seemed to feel entitled by her relations to Lucero's master. It did not take Lucero long to lose her composure under the inquisitive gaze of the woman, who was by no means so readily deceived by Lucero's disguise as men had been, and felt instinctively that there was something extraordinary about this delicate youth who was serving the father of her child. The news that the

two young pages had been with don Cristobal only for two days seemed to reassure Beatrice, but she nevertheless persisted with her questions, studying Lucero's face and figure with half-closed eyes, as though she were conscious of something incongruous between the masculine attire and the person it covered. Fortunately the innkeeper's wife had engaged Beatrice's attention for a moment, and Lucero had seized the opportunity to take refuge again in the garret chamber, where Cuevas found her still half hysterical from the danger she had just been through.

Clearly, he thought, she should not be told of the dangers that were gathering about them. She would have to be kept in ignorance of everything in order to have the poise and the effrontery which they would need to preserve their secret in the midst of all the stratagems Gonzalez would employ to effect their arrest.

Evening came on and Fernando decided it would be imprudent not to appear downstairs among the others for a time at least. The garret was very dark, and the air close. It would be more comfortable on the benches in front of the tavern where they could feel safe in the shelter of the night. They appeared at don Cristobal's door together, to bid him good night. He was to be absent for the evening, paying a last call on Doctor Acosta.

In making this visit, don Cristobal pretended to himself that he was performing a duty of good manners: now that he was better off he could not afford to appear ungrateful to one who had stood by him in his early days at Cordoba. In reality, the force working underneath, in that complex spirit where virtues and defects operated side by side, was a rancorous pride, incapable of forgetting or forgiving, a vanity wounded of old and which must now seek its balm. The physician had been the one

most soundly to assail his arguments at the conferences of the Commission at Cordoba. It would be a good idea to let the man have a look at him under a new light, now that he had signed his contracts with the King and Queen!

When, at nightfall, the physician was informed that don Cristobal was calling and desired to see him, he hurried to greet him in the atrium of his mansion with outstretched arms and at once escorted him to the library where the bronze candelabra were already lighted. The doctor was sincerely delighted at the good fortune which had come to this man whom he had known in destitution; though he noted with the ironical smile of a booklover devoted to meditation and instinctively contemptuous of force, the warlike aspect of this sword-bearing captain, once a hawker of books, to whom he had always attributed a youthful career as a pirate.

Don Cristobal began on the subject of his two sons, on whom he begged the doctor to keep an eye while he should be away. But then, abruptly ending the long formulas with which he expressed his gratitude for Acosta's consent, he came, as the physician intuited, to the real purpose of his visit, which was to announce directly, with an affected modesty that ill concealed his aggressive attitude, the triumph of his ideas:

"As you probably know, sir, Their Most Christian and Most Exalted Highnesses, the King and Queen of Spain, have been informed by me as to the lands of the Indies and about the prince of those countries, the Grand Khan, which, as you know in our language means the 'king of kings,' and as to the efforts made by the Grand Khan and his predecessors to be instructed in our Holy Faith through doctors commissioned to impart it to him

—efforts which all proved fruitless since the Holy Father in Rome was never successful in providing such teachers, whereby countless souls have gone to perdition through idolatries and false beliefs; so Their Highnessess have thought of sending me, Cristobal Colon, to the said Indies, to see the said rulers and their subjects and domains, their disposition and all about them, and to report on the best means of converting them to our Holy Faith. . . ."

Doctor Acosta had, indeed, been acquainted with all this, and nodded without speaking.

"Obedient to the commands of Their Highnesses," don Cristobal continued, "I am not to follow the routes which others have been accustomed to follow—by land, East. I am to follow the route to the West which, according to my best information, no one has ever traversed. Their Highnesses are sending me with a fleet sufficient to reach those parts of the Indies, and have shown me many favors the while, elevating me in my station so that henceforth I shall be called 'don,' and hereafter, when I shall have arrived on the other shore, naming me Admiral Major of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy and Perpetual Governor of all the islands or main land which I shall discover and conquer, and of all lands which those with me shall discover and conquer—and these graces shall descend upon my elder son, and so on from generation to generation, forever. . . ."

The doctor replied quietly, congratulating the Adventurer on such an inviting prospect, though with an ironical glint in his eye:

"But what I am afraid of, don Cristobal, is that you may be mistaken, and that you will go sailing on and on without ever reaching the coasts of the Grand Khan,

which are much farther off than you say or even imagine. The earth is really several thousand miles greater in circumference than you believe it to be!"

The future Admiral stiffened at hearing once more the physician's objection to which he had always attributed his failure at the discussion before the Commission in Cordoba. And he lost some of the reticence and mysteriousness which he always manifested whenever he was asked for the grounds of his beliefs:

"I shall sight land seven hundred leagues west. I know what I am talking about—and that is all there is to it. Others have actually seen such land—people who are no longer living. . . ."

Then he checked himself, as though his habitual prudence had reasserted itself.

There was a long silence. The doctor sat looking at his visitor, but with eyes far away, as though he were sunk in thought. Don Cristobal's last words had awakened in him vague memories which he was trying to recover. What he had always admired in this man was his perseverance, his unshakable faith. Don Cristobal had the forcefulness of every dreamer who dreams but one dream, and pursues it to the exclusion of everything else. Sometimes, perplexed by this faith without foundations, by these flat assertions destitute of proof, the doctor wondered whether behind this mysterious existence there may not have lain some truth guarded in secret, something which don Cristobal knew but judged inexpedient to reveal to the world.

However, Acosta overlooked the inadvertence, if such it were, and answered with the frankness of the scientist willing to admit the possibility of any surprise from the unknown, insisting merely that such possibilities be made to conform to ideas already solidly established.

"Well, if there is land seven hundred leagues West, or even a thousand or fifteen hundred leagues west, you must admit one thing: it cannot be the land of the Grand Khan—it cannot be Asia. It must be, forgive the supposition, it must be some new world of which no one ever heard, a world which has existed from the first days of Creation, but which we, poor sinners that we are, have not been allowed to know!"

The doctor smiled at his own hypothesis, so absurd did it appear. Don Cristobal also laughed aloud, but in derision, at the straits to which his antagonist had been reduced in order to escape admitting that Cathay and Cipango were there!

But then they both looked around instinctively as though they feared having been heard. A new world, unknown to the Christians, and of which not a word was spoken in the Scriptures inspired of God! What heresy! In fact the notion was so heretical, so utterly mad, that good humor came back into a conversation which had been turning toward bitterness. They laughed again, and began discussing amiably the preparations that don Cristobal would have to make for his voyage.

They were interrupted by an uproar in the street—cries of women, shouts of alarm, the sounds of violently hurrying footsteps. The doctor and don Cristobal stepped to a window and shouted to people who were passing to learn what it was all about. The answers that came back were not very clear.

"A fight—knives! . . . Several people hurt! . . . In front of Herboso's house!"

As Acosta and his companion were going to the door to get better information, the doctor remarked:

"This certainly has something to do with our friend, don Alonso de Ojeda!"

He was not mistaken.

Fernando and Lucero had found seats near the tavern door, on one of the stones that were used by travellers for mounting their horses.

Fernando was full of all that he had seen, heard, and done during this exciting day in a strange town, which he began describing to the young girl with as much assurance as though he had lived there all his life. Lucero listened in happy comfort in that cool evening air, free now from the odors of the stable which penetrated all the inner rooms of the tavern ranged about the court. She could see the stars trembling in the stretch of sky between the projecting eaves of the houses. Windows and grating were brightening from lights indoors, while at intervals along the street points of fire were beginning to glow—shrines of holy images stuccoed in tile each with its lamp in olive oil. Before the doors of some of the houses groups were already seated, as in full summertime, to enjoy an evening chat before going in to supper and to bed. From the living room of the tavern *patio*, just behind, came the strumming of guitars with an accompaniment of castanets. Some drivers, jolly with wine, were dancing with the maids and other women of the house, fun in which Buenosvinos and his family, as well as other people of the neighborhood were joining. From time to time someone would chant a copla to mark new movements in the dance.

The two lovers would have been only too eager to have their part in so much gaiety; but the thought of Beatrice and her two sharp eyes was enough to drive any such temptation from Lucero's mind. No, it was better to stay where they were, and enjoy what little they could see of this great and marvelous Cordoba.

Cuevas had just completed his portrait of the grave

and stately Doctor Acosta, when chance offered him a much more impressive opportunity to display the important acquaintances he had already made. He called Lucero's attention to a young *hidalgo* who was coming down the street, keeping close to the wall as though he were trying to avoid being seen. There could be no doubt about it—it was don Alonso de Ojeda! And Fernando made haste to tell all he knew of the distinguished warrior and to relate the service which he himself had performed that morning for the great man.

Now, however, there was something new in the hero's attire. In the faint light of the street, a metallic sheen could be observed under the flaps of don Alonso's cape! He had put on a cuirass for this evening stroll!

The youth vanished into the dark under the overhanging eaves farther down the street. But Fernando knew where he was going!

"He's already at one of the windows of Herboso's house, talking with doña Isabel! The letter I handed her this morning must have been about a meeting tonight!"

And Cuevas began to describe the splendors of the Cordoban beauty whom he had glimpsed for a second beyond the window gratings of the mansion. Then as though he needed to see the outcome of an adventure in which he had had a share, however humble, he stepped away from Lucero for a moment to see just what don Alonso was doing. It was almost supper time. Lucero could sit where she was, and call him when the evening meal was ready! He would be only a short distance down the street.

He advanced cautiously toward the lawyer's house. However, in the thick darkness cast by the projecting eaves, he did not discern his hero, till he had reached a

point on the street directly in front of one of the Herboso gratings.

Don Alonso had drawn himself close to the wall at the window; but at the sound of Fernando's footstep, he turned about as in alarm, while Fernando saw a face disappear from behind the grating.

Ojeda gave a grunt of relieved satisfaction;

"Oh, only you!"

And Cuevas thought the knight had sensed the good intentions of this eavesdropping; for he at once turned again toward the window.

His curiosity satisfied, Cuevas went directly back to the inn, without taking any particular precautions to pass unobserved. Lucero was probably lonely without him; dinner would soon be ready; and to tell the truth, the noisy gaiety in the courtyard of the tavern tempted him—he and Lucero could look on from seats in one of the darker corners!

He found Lucero still sitting on the stone, and communicated his idea to her. In order to look over the ground in advance for the proper seats he stopped for a moment in the entrance to the tavern, at a point where the red lights of the patio played full upon him.

Suddenly he felt a heavy hand fall upon his shoulder, the fingers sinking into his muscles with nervous force.

"At last I have you, louse of Satan!"

He did not need to turn to recognize that voice. It was Pero Gonzalez, the ex-Royal Butler, and at Gonzalez's side, Garduña, and with them still a third individual, also dressed in black, like the constable, but a larger and more powerful man, and armed with a broadsword which hung from his belt—one of the so-called "hooks," doubtless, who attended Spanish agents of justice to help in arrests especially at night.

All this Cuevas took in at a glance while, in a spasm of alarm he tore loose from Gonzalez's clutch with a violent bound and broke through the circle the three men were drawing around him. Instinctively he turned in the direction of Herboso's house with a confused thought that there he had a friend and that by running away he would entice his persecutors farther from Lucero. Recovering from the surprise occasioned by the suddenness of the boy's dash, the three men followed rapidly in pursuit.

"Don Alonso, don Alonso!" cried Cuevas. "Help me! Help me!"

Running as he was, he nevertheless heard the hurried closing of a window shutter and a figure clad in a coat of mail interposed itself between him and his pursuers.

"Just a moment, gentlemen," said Ojeda. "Let this boy alone! He is a friend of mine! Otherwise, defend yourselves!"

And in the flash in which all this had occurred, don Alonso had thrown his cape over his left arm, drawn his sword with his right hand, and stood facing Gonzalez, who had halted before him.

The Butler recognized the famous Ojeda, but, strong in the feeling that he had the law with him and that, anyhow, it was a case of three against one, he was not sparing in his language. He knew Ojeda well, and had never liked him, partly out of contempt for his poverty, but also through the bad reports that Garduña had in the past frequently brought home from the stations of the Brotherhood.

"All you have to do, sir," he answered, "is to mind your own business, and not interfere with officers of the law. I belong to the King's household. Only from him do I accept orders!"

Unluckily, given the character of Ojeda, the Butler had made the mistake of drawing his sword, an example followed by Garduña and by the latter's assistant, a man who had been nicknamed by the town as "the Bum-bailiff." A threat made under conditions of superior force was all that was needed to provoke Ojeda, whatever the merits of the cause. Cuevas, meantime had gathered a handful of stones, and was pelting his adversaries with them, though he was soon obliged to cease for fear of hitting don Alonso. For that matter, he shortly became so absorbed in the magnificence of his hero's attack as quite to forget his own interest in the outcome.

It was just as Buenosvinos had said. Ojeda was as good as a dozen men. He was everywhere at once, parrying blows from all directions and attacking in his turn. His agility seemed to translate itself into time, giving an impression of long duration to a combat that was probably over in a few seconds. Cuevas stood there with his stones looking eagerly for a chance to throw one. But suddenly he saw the Royal Butler hurled back, as it were against the wall of the house, letting his sword fall, and throwing both hands to his head, while blood began streaming down his face. The man's knees seemed to sag under him and he sank to the ground, calling feebly for "help" and "confession."

The other two men were also on the defensive, for a short distance backing off but finally turning frankly and taking to their heels, with don Alonso in hot pursuit. Cuevas followed on behind, stopping every few feet to send a stone after the fugitives.

As the combat moved pellmell down the street the whole quarter seemed to come to life. Doors and windows

began noisily to close, people scampered from their doorways into the interiors of their houses shouting and calling for "the King's Peace." As Fernando ran past the inn of "Three Wise Men," he observed Lucero standing upright on her stone, somewhat frightened but still fascinated by the prowess of the young knight whom her lover so much admired. Buenosvinos was peering out of his door, terrified at the violent disturbance of the peace, but ready to protest if any of the combatants sought refuge in his courtyard. Farther along Cuevas saw don Cristobal and Doctor Acosta appearing at the entrance to the latter's house. His master had drawn his sword, but the doctor was following him with empty hands, without losing any of his wonted composure.

Don Alonso really had little interest in pursuing the fleeing officers of the law. Rather his principal thought was to remove himself from the neighborhood before any consequences of the fighting arose. Catching sight of don Cristobal he halted, and Fernando could see his whole sturdy figure standing clad in mail under the red lantern that illuminated the doorway of the doctor's house. He had lost his cap and in order to fight with greater freedom he had thrown his cape away. His face was pale, his eyes flashing with a certain golden glow. The lower third of his sword blade was red with blood.

Bowing in salute to don Cristobal, he nevertheless addressed his first words to the physician, his voice still shaking with the excitement of the fray:

"Doctor," he said with a sarcastic smile, "a few doors down the street I believe you will find someone who needs your help. . . . And if I'm not mistaken, another one has just dropped down this way, at the next corner."

Then turning to don Cristobal, he added:

"And you, Captain, may expect me in the Port of Palos within the month. With the help of My Lady, the Blessed Virgin, I shall be there before you sail, and we shall depart together on the road to the Grand Khan."

CHAPTER V

SEÑOR MARTIN ALONSO

Fernando Cuevas regarded the daily trip on foot between Palos and the monastery of La Rábida as two hours of delightful play. His master was staying with the friars, employing Lucero in his personal service. For Fernando himself, lodgings had been found in town with an old man of poor estate—the sacristan of the parish Church of Saint George. Don Cristobal had judged the youth from Andujar a stout and spirited fellow well able to use his legs; and thought it best that he, rather than his frailer companion, should live in Palos along with six or eight other individuals who, without being sailors or connected with the sea, had come on from Cordoba and other places to follow him on his adventure.

On rising in the morning Fernando would knock discreetly at the sacristan's door to inquire if there was anything he could do. Receiving the unfailing negative, he would start out for La Rábida, on the excuse that he must have the orders of his real master. The dusty road ran between groves of broad topped pines which completely masked the convent on the land side, though its vistas out over the sea were clear. To the right, as he hurried along he could make out, through a colonnade of dark pines, the long shining thread of the *Rio Tinto*, which seemed to end at a tongue of yellow sand. Beyond the sand, came the Odiel, which joined the *Rio Tinto*

just below and formed an estuary which, in its turn, reached the Ocean around the two sides of the Isle of Saltes.

The trot of half a league each day was nothing to this young man, and Santa Maria de La Rábida would soon come into view, its walls whitewashed, its groves somewhat bent by the prevailing wind—from the distance, a farm house, rather than a monastery. In fact La Rábida was the most unpretentious convent the boy had ever seen: a dormitory with perhaps a dozen cells for the friars, two inner cloisters, a church with three chapels—that was all. Just before arriving at the convent gate, Fernando passed a cross raised on a pedestal of stone. There months before, he had been told, his master had stopped to rest, weary, dusty from his long tramp, without money, and leading his son Diego, a boy of nine, by the hand.

Fernando's first concern was to escape detection by this little Diego, who would always join Fernando and Lucero, if he found them, and stay with them on their romps about the neighborhood. Finally the two lovers had appointed a secluded nook in the garden as their trysting place. There Fernando would lie in hiding till the pretended page appeared. At other times Lucero would be there first and her lover would find her waiting for him, stretched full length on the pine needles under the trees. Never, in all the time since the unknown traveller had taken them into service on the road from Granada to Cordoba, had they had such opportunities to be together alone as in this solitary convent by the sea. They had drawn a breath of relief when their master had set out with them from Cordoba the day following the mêlée in which don Alonso de Ojeda had cracked the heads of two men in order to rescue Cuevas. The inn at

Seville where don Cristobal lingered for several days had also been a terror to them. The population of Seville at the moment was passing through a spasm of Jew-baiting in the belief that many Israelites were trying to evade the edict of exile and escape with their properties. All strangers were being scanned as to their race and origin, and the two lovers were in constant dread lest Lucero's disguise be penetrated and both of them fall into the clutches of the law.

Not till they reached La Rábida had they found that great relief which comes from the cessation of a danger. Here no one was worried about Jews. The inhabitants of Palos and Moguer, the two villages on the river banks, as well as the people at Huelva on the Odiel across the tongue of sand, seemed to live apart from the affairs of the rest of Spain, concerned only with the harvest on their farm lands, or with the adventures of life at sea.

The two villages, at the moment, were all agog about the stranger staying at La Rábida with papers and orders from the Sovereigns. This was the great local event, quite overshadowing the late fall of Granada and the more recent decrees ordering exile of the Jews. Fernando and Lucero, indeed, were now hardly conscious of the reasons which had driven them to this region so far removed from their previous lives. Only the present was real to them. They knew their master had brought them thither in connection with a voyage which had set everyone to talking, a voyage that had something vague and doubtful about it, and which, as they guessed, might never really be made.

For the most part they were quite alone. Late in the afternoon they would be likely to see don Cristobal taking his exercise in the little square in front of the entrance to the monastery, Father Perez, with him—the

man who had helped him so much at Santa Fé, and Garci Hernandez, a physician from Palos, or other inhabitants from the two villages, some of them farmers of means, but for the most part men of the sea, shipmasters who had made long voyages and were now following less dangerous careers, catching herring along the coast for the profitable sardine trade.

Lucero had now grown quite accustomed to a manner of living so unadapted to her sex. After the painful trials she had been through during the first days of her flight, her rest in this secluded cove of the sea seemed to have given her new vigor. Indeed she remembered that she was a girl only when alone with Fernando. At other times she worked like a real valet, caring for the quarters and the belongings of don Cristobal, and attending to little Diego, who was forever pestering her with his childish wants and questions.

When, sitting under one of the great pine trees of the convent, they could be sure they were quite alone, they would talk of themselves as they gazed out over the green liquid plain of the estuary toward the Isle of Saltes with its watch tower, the Saltes bar marked by a line of surf, and beyond that the dark blue Ocean. The future they had dreamed of together now seemed as far away as that distant horizon, and they could not imagine how they would ever attain it.

It was Fernando, with his greater knowledge of the world, who proposed specific steps and measures. Lucero ought to become a Christian and accept baptism! There could be no marriage between them without that! This suggestion seemed to rouse her as from a dream, and at first she listened to it with horror! Baptism had always been painted in her family in such frightful colors! At that very moment, her father and his kin were giving up

their all and setting out on a journey that might end in death, to avoid just such a profanation! Then gradually, in dread of losing Fernando, she took to the thought more kindly. Yes, she would be baptized . . . but later on, as a good occasion offered! And they would drop the subject of matrimony.

Meantime, though they would often sit holding each other's hands, they kept fearfully aloof from caresses. That was too dangerous! Let anyone discover that Lucero was a girl, and it would also be discovered that she was a Jewess. Then she would be sent out of the country. Even were she to confess the truth and request baptism, she would be sent to a convent to be instructed in the faith, and probably be separated from Fernando forever. Such fears seemed especially to beset Lucero, who would never forget the nightmare of Niebla. She always repelled Fernando's slightest kiss:

"Not now, no! I am afraid. Wait till we get over there in those lands of the West, with the master!"

Not that they could see any immediate prospect of such a journey! From the long conversations between don Cristobal, the friars, and their many visitors, which were often conducted in Lucero's presence, it was evident to her that the preparations were meeting all kinds of difficulties, and greater and greater ones. Cuevas, for his part, heard what was being whispered in Palos.

One Wednesday—somehow Fernando always remembered the date—the twenty-third of May of the year 1492—don Cristobal, doctor Garci Hernandez and other prominent individuals of the locality, had an early morning meeting in the Square at Palos just in front of the Church of Saint George, an edifice much neglected in its interior which had once been a mosque and still retained a brick portal of Mussulman design. In

the company present were the mayors of the two towns with delegates from the town alderman. The Warden of La Rábida was ex-officio curate of the parish and he came to lend support to the man he had seen fit to sponsor. Don Cristobal also was further fortified with papers which Their Highnesses had issued for him.

The men of Palos were simple mariners, accustomed to life on the sea and little read in matters of the law. It seemed that they had committed various offenses to the prejudice of the Monarchs, who were therefore condemning them to furnish, as a fine, two caravels, to be delivered within a period of six months, to such port as later would be specified. In other papers which don Cristobal bore the town was commanded to deliver them to one Cristobal Colon as representative of Their Royal Persons; and don Cristobal at once proceeded to announce seizure of those two of the many caravels moored in the basin which he had selected as best suited to his purposes.

But these formalities once completed, he found himself unable to go any farther. A caravel could not put to sea without a crew, and not a man of Palos would set foot on either of the two vessels! The mariners all along shore, from retired captains living at their ease down to the poorest seamen and fishermen, offered passive and silent resistance to the urgings of this outsider who had come to town and begun bidding them do this and do that in the name of the Sovereigns.

As time went by and nothing happened, don Cristobal sought and obtained another royal warrant, promising a moratorium to persons under public prosecution or private process who should volunteer for the trans-Atlantic expedition. Not even this extraordinary recourse had any effect. Every seafarer of the neighbor-

hood was outraged that a couple of royalties, living at ease with their courtiers far inland should come and order them and their vessels about as they pleased, thinking they could square accounts by reading aloud a yard or two of parchment! Not that anybody was afraid of the voyage itself! Don Cristobal had selected Palos for his departure, because he knew that when the sailors of the region tired of fishing or of short sails about the Mediterranean, they would ship on ocean going vessels bound for England or the ports of the Baltic. Many a man among them had been as far as the Canaries or even run the Portuguese blockade to the coasts of Guinea. But such things they had done of their own free choice, for wages agreed upon with the outfitters plus the usual percentage on the total gains! Here now was a man no one had ever heard of before, who had perhaps sailed a ship but who had seen sirens and other things the shipmasters in town knew could not exist! And he was going to conscript them like men for the navy, and pay them only the miserable wages the navy paid!

Fernando Cuevas circulated freely about the docks and the village square, and heard the comments people were making. Sailors were ready to work under a captain they knew when they were shown half a chance of making something. Why should they consider going with a man who could be found any day in a convent of friars but had never been seen on a quarter deck? Supposing the expedition didn't amount to anything? They would come back with their lives, probably; but this homeless dog, without responsibilities, could just leave them in the lurch and go elsewhere with his sirens and Grand Khans. Or, if the voyage were successful, if they did get to India, this don Cristobal would get all

the titles and all the money, while they, who had faced the same dangers and done the same work, would get from the Royal Paymaster a sum of money smaller than a man could make by one lucky scoop of herring!

So one day after another went by. The two embargoed caravels lay moored at their wharf in the little basin, as silent and deserted as though a curse had been laid upon them. Don Cristobal could sense an atmosphere of moody hostility about him the moment he left La Rábida and went in to Palos. He began to feel as hopeless and as lonely as he had at Cordoba when no one was taking any interest in his dreams. Little good the commissions and patents from the Sovereigns were doing him! He might stay on the banks of the Tinto and the Odiel till he died, for all the sailors they would raise!

Every night, after dinner, various men of Palos, most of them acquaintances or friends of don Cristobal, were wont to foregather in the house of an old sea dog named Pero Vasquez de la Frontera. They could think of only one issue from the situation which confronted the expedition:

"We must wait for señor Martin Alonso—he is the only man who can settle this thing."

Señor Martin Alonso was the richest and most influential of the Pinzons, a family as numerous in its branches as a tribe, in the neighborhood of Palos and Moguer. At the moment señor Martin Alonso was not at home. He had gone off with a cargo of Andalucian wines to Ostia, expecting to sell them in Rome. His return was eagerly awaited by everyone; for it would be interesting to see just what he would have to say about all the trouble this stranger was making with his seizure of the two boats and the conscription of sailors on warrant from Their Highnesses!

Meanwhile, though the time was passing, don Cristobal did not dare make use of the warrants he held to "set table" in Palos.

"Setting table" was the equivalent of shipping men for a voyage. The outfitter or captain in search of crews would set a table in the village square in front of the church, and on it a pile of money for immediate payment of the first half of wages to any who should enroll. Don Cristobal knew what a humiliation it would be to be seen sitting at his table, with all the sailor folk of Palos and Moguer looking on and laughing, without a man stepping forward to give his name.

"It's not because they are afraid," Cuevas would explain to Lucero during their interviews under the pines of La Rábida. "Here in Palos, there is a man named Pero Vasquez, who was a shipmaster of the King of Portugal, and sailed West until he met a sea of grasses. He still complains because his crew refused to go on. He is certain that a little beyond they would have found land. . . . Many people talk of an island called Antilia and of another called the Isle of the Seven Cities settled by seven Portuguese and Spanish bishops at the time the Moors first overran Spain. And there's the story of Alonso Sanchez, captain of Huelva, who was caught by a storm during a voyage to the Canaries and swept westward for days till he came to a great island where he took on water and spars and got back to Madeira. But on the return journey all his crew died, and he himself died of his sufferings within a day or two, but not till he had told his story and given his log to the family which took him in. Our master, don Cristobal, lived for several years on Madeira and on Puerto Santo, an island near by; and the people here say that he got his idea of a voyage to the land of the Grand Khan from

the papers of Alonso Sanchez. I cannot say how much truth there is in all this. But if don Cristobal cannot raise men, it is not because they dislike the voyage, but because they refuse to be enlisted by force and do not know our master well enough."

So far, along all the coast of Niebla where people subsisted wholly on the sea, don Cristobal had found but four men willing to follow him, and those by virtue of the immunities granted by the Royal Authority to individuals pursued at law.

A sailor of Palos, Bartholomew de Torres by name, had quarreled with the village crier, a man of violent disposition named Juan Martin. De Torres had killed the herald in an encounter with knives, and though the fight had been a fair one, with both parties armed and face to face, the victor was condemned to be hanged, since the dead man had been a public official. The sentence was not popular in the district, and three other sailors, Alfonso Clavijo, Juan de Moguer and Pero Izquierdo—generous hearts under hot heads—refused to desert a comrade who had often stood by them in moments of danger on the lonely seas. They stormed the village prison and released Torres. Thereupon all four had been condemned to death. But as yet they had not been apprehended. They were in hiding about the neighborhood of Palos, under the more or less overt protection of the inhabitants.

The proclamation of immunity made by the Sovereigns in behalf of don Cristobal offered the fugitives an opportunity to return in safety to their homes, and they had availed themselves of it.

But two caravels could not put to sea with four men. Fernando Cuevas doubted whether his master would ever be able to make his much talked of voyage. Unless

señor Martin Alonso Pinzon came to the rescue with his prestige and influence with the sailors of Palos, the future Admiral of the Ocean Sea would be more likely to remain on dry land with his two boy servants for a guard of honor!

If able seamen were scarce, there were a few volunteer landlubbers, people who knew nothing of maritime adventure, but were eager to accompany the expedition in the hope of finding gold or of occupying some high position in the empire which don Cristobal promised to conquer. The first of such to appear was a gentleman of Cordoba, a certain don Diego de Arana, one of Beatrice's cousins. The man Arana had been in Palos for some days, viewing with alarm the bad turn the enterprise of this foreigner, irregularly related to his family, was taking. Don Cristobal had promised him a post as high constable, or chief disciplinarian, of the fleet. Arrogant, boastful and a great flourisher of his sword, don Diego had not attained the place he aspired to in the constabulary at Cordoba. He thought that perhaps his ambitions could be realized through this father of his bastard cousin, Hernandico, who might make him high dispenser of justice in lands of the East far larger than all Spain! Don Diego was looking for a larger opportunity to order others about and he could already see himself in the Orient holding court with the majesty and the wisdom of King Solomon.

As don Cristobal struggled with the headstrong resistance of the sailors of the Niebla seashore, he would sometimes think of his young friend, don Alonso de Ojeda. With a man of such courage and such ready prowess to support him, he thought he would enjoy greater respect from the people about him. Besides he had been counting on Ojeda as the military leader of

his expedition which would probably have to deal with the fierce giants, pygmies, and dragons that Mandeville and others had seen on their journeys to the Far Eastern Isles of Asia. From Cordoba, meanwhile, came advices of Pero Gonzalez, the sometime Royal Butler, promising to appear in Palos the moment he had recovered from a severe cut on his scalp!

Don Cristobal was sure he could heal the breach between these two friends of his—their quarrel must have arisen through some misunderstanding. For that matter he had left Cordoba without ever discovering the real occasion of the fight in front of Herboso's house. The most diverse explanations had been proffered him by gossip. People about the inn of "The Three Wise Men" were generally inclined to believe that the lawyer had paid Garduña to make an attack on don Alonso, to put an end to the nuisance the young man was causing by parading up and down in front of doña Isabel's windows at all hours of day and night.

At any rate, don Cristobal had written to his friends at Court to procure a pardon for the quick-tempered Ojeda. To be sure, if worse came to worst, he could avail himself of the right of pardon given him by Their Highnesses for anyone willing to enlist for the expedition West; but he judged that drastic course inopportune in view of the influence which lawyer Herboso was doubtless using to bring don Alonso to justice.

From the youth himself don Cristobal had received but one letter; and since Lucero was coming to be in touch with all the ordinary business of the expedition, so far as its leader talked openly in her presence, she made haste to communicate the good news to Fernando. Don Alonso said that he would soon be in Palos, with or without the Royal Grace; and the prospect filled the

two lovers with great hopefulness. They had already begun to see in young Ojeda a second master, on whom they felt instinctively they could rely to the end!

Unfortunately the person who arrived was not don Alonso de Ojeda, but the High Sheriff of Cordoba, in person, the same harsh, insolent, sneering Garduña, with the usual sword clanking at his belt, with the usual roll of warrants and summonses! Garduña appeared at the Convent of La Rábida in company with the Lord Governor of Palos and demanded an interview with don Cristobal.

Lucero was present at the meeting. The Sheriff had papers for the arrest of one Alonso de Ojeda, whose body he was to present to the Lord Governor of Cordoba at the instance of the jurist Herboso. Garduña had not forgotten the fright he had received and the sorry figure he had made that night in front of Herboso's house. He was taking a personal interest in the case. His investigations had shown that the spirited *hidalgo* was not in Cordoba. There Ojeda had dwelt for some weeks frequently changing abode, either lurking about various churches where he could not be taken or hiding in the houses of friends. On a few occasions he had been bold enough to appear openly in public to the extent of seeking new interviews with his lady through the gratings on the ground floor of Herboso's mansion!

This descent on Palos was an inspiration of Garduña's own. He had learned of the youth's friendship with the sometime "Don Out-at-Elbows," and suspected his intention of joining the voyage of discovery. The important point was to lay hands on don Alonso, who, once a prisoner in his power, would not be helped much by any royal amnesty!

Don Cristobal was in a position to tell the exact

truth. He knew and highly esteemed don Alonso de Ojeda, but he had not yet been honored with a visit from him in Palos. The Sheriff waited for some days in the town, nevertheless, investigating all strangers in sight and especially new arrivals, believing that every sailor's garb might harbor the fugitive warrior. This situation could only be dangerous for the two lovers, and Cuevas saw himself threatened with separation not only from Lucero but even from the voyage in search of the Grand Khan.

In reality neither Garduña nor Pero Gonzalez had learned anything in Cordoba that gave them reason to believe that the two servants attending don Cristobal had anything in common with the fugitives from Andujar. Buenosvinos, the inn-keeper, had divined the truth the moment he saw Cuevas fleeing from Garduña and his man and calling on don Alonso for help. But he had taken a liking to Fernando and Lucero, and as between friends of don Cristobal or of Alonso de Ojeda, and the grasping Royal Butler and his cousin, the corrupt High Constable of Cordoba, the tavern keeper could not be in doubt. When questioned by officials the day after the brawl, he had given the boy who had caused the trouble clothes different from those worn by Fernando; and to throw the pursuers farther off the track, he had added that as the boy ran away he was followed by a young girl, apparently a Jewess. Buenosvinos knew the truth, but he withheld it from the authorities, as he did many things that went on in his tavern.

Though Garduña had seen Cuevas and knew his name, he did not dream of the boy's presence in Palos and never happened to catch sight of him. The young man called Diego Alcanices had left the house of the sacristan of Saint George's the moment Garduña ap-

peared and had gone to the village of Moguer to live with a rich farmer named Cabezudo, who had a passionate admiration for don Cristobal and his plans, and was offering hospitality and encouragement to everyone connected with the voyage. There Fernando kept in virtual hiding for some days, meantime in the greatest anxiety from not being able to see Lucero, but keeping himself informed through Cabezudo as to the Sheriff's movements.

One morning the farmer brought him a most disquieting piece of news:

"It seems 'the Weasel' is now interested in your brother who is with don Cristobal at the convent. He is threatening to take him back to Cordoba as a prisoner. He says that both of you are Jews, and that you have run away from home to escape moving to Morocco, as the Monarchs have ordered. No one believes his story, but it might be well for you to go in to Palos and see how the ground lies. You may soon be in trouble."

Fernando made his way at top speed to the Convent of La Rábida, taking out of the way roads to avoid Palos. He lay in hiding about the monastery for some time, hoping to catch sight of Lucero without revealing his own presence. By good fortune the girl eventually appeared at the door of the building in the course of performing an errand for don Cristobal and on hearing the familiar signal which had often warned her of Fernando's visits, she went, without more ado, to their usual trysting place.

Lucero laughed with a certain superiority on learning the cause of Fernando's terror. No, that danger was past! She had already been questioned on repeated occasions by the terrible officer of the law, insisting firmly that she was the son of a poor soldier of Andujar who

had died in the service of Their Highnesses. Some of the friars at the convent had found her a modest obedient servant, and took her side against the Sheriff, ridiculing, with don Cristobal also, the idea that she might be a Jew. Her devotion at services in the convent church had been the subject of favorable comment on all sides.

Unfortunately she had no travelling papers to prove her birth and name, but she had hit upon an issue from this difficulty.

"I have a way of finding friends almost everywhere," she whispered. "My mother once taught me certain words which I was to say aloud whenever I found myself in danger but in the presence of people whom I thought I could trust even though I did not know them. When they were leading me to Palos, I chanced to see an old sailor, whom I took for a Jew. I pronounced the words in question, and he came to me and asked me what he could do. I begged him to go to the Sheriff and inform him that he had known my father, Squire Salcedo, and that he could vouch for everything that I had said. He did so, and Garduña was satisfied for the moment. To be sure he is not quite convinced; but he is afraid of angering don Cristobal, and says he will wait to make further investigation at Cordoba."

Lucero lowered her voice still further:

"The man also told me that other sailors like himself would join the expedition, as a means of escaping from the terrible exile in Africa."

The following day, the Sheriff, to the great relief of the two lovers, took a hasty departure from Palos in response to a summons from Cordoba. Don Alonso de Ojeda had never gone to the coast of Niebla, as the lawyer Herboso could now testify on very good grounds.

What these grounds were the Sheriff explained to

various people in Palos before he left. A week before, that devil of a don Alonso had suddenly come forth from his hiding place in Cordoba, to appear at Herboso's house, break one of the gratings of the lower windows, and carry off the beautiful Isabel with the young Moorish slave girl who attended her. No one knew where the fugitives had gone, and the Sheriff, well named "the Weasel" was ordered to return at once to assist in running them down.

Cuevas and Lucero could sleep once more on learning of Garduña's departure. This much more important matter would distract him from his suspicions as to the race of the valet who was attending the Genoese adventurer and of the second page whom he had not been able to set eyes on. Don Alonso had saved them a second time, from a distance and without knowing it, when he carried doña Isabelita from her father's house! It had also been their fortune that don Cristobal, immersed in his many troubles in connection with the voyage, had ended by losing patience with the Constable, refusing finally to give him any more interviews and reminding him that the conquest of a new empire for Their Highnesses was something much more urgent than the prosecution of two menials suspected of being Jews. He affirmed in good faith that he did not know the whereabouts of Lucero's brother, whose name he had forgotten and whom he had not seen for some time. The Salcedo boy himself could supply the best information on that point.

The danger past, the two lovers could now take full account of the risks they had been running. Had Garduña delayed long enough in Palos to find Fernando, he would have had some consolations for his journey; he could have compensated his failure to arrest don Alonso

de Ojeda by at last laying hands on the two young people sought by his friend the Royal Butler. Lucero, indeed, was now able to confess her fright. She had had all along the presentiment that the Sheriff would soon be forced to go away; and this feeling alone had prevented her from fleeing the convent, joining Fernando at Moguer, and setting out with him on a new flight, who could say whither.

The days following were a time of great happiness for them. One morning a wave of excitement thrilled over the Port of Palos and its neighborhood. The Pinzon caravel had been sighted off the estuary, and would soon be moored in the basin! Now at last the question of don Cristobal's expedition would be settled! Cuevas had again returned to the sacristan of Saint George's, after his "visit" with Cabezudo; and their sole topic of conversation was the famous pilot who was known all along the coast of Niebla as "señor Martin Alonso."

"No wonder he's the most beloved man along shore," the sacristan would say. "He always says 'mister' to every man on his ship, even to the cook and the deck-scrubbers. He is godfather to half the population of the district. And what courage! When we were at war with Portugal, he fitted out his own ship and took prize after prize along the coasts to the Northward. He is a little man, but with a great deep voice. What a tan on his face! And eyes that catch and hold your attention, now laughing good-naturedly and now softening with a thoughtful expression. He must be about fifty, with those five fine boys of his, everyone of them as good a seaman as he is! He is well off too. From sailor he became owner and outfitter; and from that he went into trade, buying in the Canaries or in Guinea and selling about the Mediterranean, as far away as Italy. He has long had a no-

tion as crazy as this one of don Cristobal's. Once when he was in Rome, a friend of his there, the librarian to the Pope, showed him a map with two big islands beyond the Canaries, one called Antilia, the other the Isle of the Seven Cities. Señor Martin Alonso says people are all wrong. The islands in question are really Cipango. And he has long been saying that when he has time and money enough, he's going to get into his caravel and go out there and prove it."

On señor Martin Alonso's arrival, Father Juan Perez of La Rábida at once bestirred himself, and the following day the captain, pilot and outfitter of Palos presented himself at the convent. The so-called "Warden's Hall," with its famous ceiling of wood fashioned to represent an overturned boat, was the scene of the conference. Pinzon was returning from Rome flushed with a new enthusiasm for his idea. He was going out to find Cipango! Why leave all the new lands to the Portuguese? Let them go chasing their Antilia and their Seven Cities! Those who knew best—a librarian of the Pope ought to know—said it was Cipango!

The well-intentioned maneouvres of the Warden helped to establish a kind of tacit partnership between the two future discoverers. Don Cristobal could summon marvellous self-control at times, and on this occasion showed himself modest, conciliatory, even humble before the courageous navigator of Andalucia. Why not go together? Cipango, and just beyond, the rich district of Mangui, the most opulent in all Cathay! There would be enough for both of them. He, don Cristobal, had papers from the Monarchs, and the money they had given him. Under his command the voyage would have status as a royal expedition. Pinzon would contribute his experience as a pilot, his own boats, the boats of his

friends—and best of all a personal prestige which would make all the seamen of the neighborhood willing to follow him!

The shrewd friar left them alone to make their bargain more at their ease. No one, not even Lucero, heard their conversation. Surely the complex contradictory nature of the Genoese adventurer developed all its caution and pliancy at this moment of actual negotiation. It was no longer a sentimental question of Christianizing the world or serving Spain—the two men talked like outfitters figuring on a voyage that involved great risks but also offered chances for huge winnings.

Don Cristobal, one may imagine, made generous concessions, with the smoothness of a Genoese merchant, if such was his origin, throwing out glowing prospects and words of enthusiasm, but always evading anything that could take final form in writing. The Spaniard, a plain-spoken trusting soul, all of a piece, caught the enthusiasm without noting how much, after all, was left vague and indefinite—just words, unrecorded and unwitnessed, despite the importance of the values at stake.

"Señor Martin Alonso," one can see don Cristobal exclaiming, stretching out his right hand as though to summarize all that had been said, "between straightforward men of the sea like us, a man's word is a man's word. Let us sail on this voyage together, and if we come out well, if God guides us to new lands, I promise by the Crown of Spain to share with you as my loyal brother, the half of all profit, honor, and interest, there may be in it."

Through the ports of Palos, Monguera and Huelva, on the following morning, the news went abroad that señor Martin Alonso had come to an understanding with "the foreigner," and that the two were going off to-

gether to discover new lands. Excited groups of sailors could be seen standing about the boats drawn high on the strand to discuss the new prospect. For that matter, already, in front of the Church of St. George, Pinzon had "set table" on his own responsibility, with the further announcement that crews would be easy to find.

One of his brothers sat behind the table, with a notary to record the names of each man who enrolled. On the table top, as tempting bait and also as proof that the venture was not the dream of penniless adventurers, rose two piles of money—a smaller one of gold, doubloons with the profiles of Ferdinand and Isabel, and a higher one of silver coins, from various realms, generally current at the time. Walking about the square but for the most part near at hand, Martin Alonso would keep his eyes on his table. When he saw a fair sized group about it, he would go back, and knowing his people well begin to encourage them with chosen words:

"See here, my friends, listen to me! We're off on a trip, and you ought to come with us. Why drag on from hand to mouth around here? This voyage is going to reach new land, a place called Cipango, where, they say, the houses are shingled with gold. Every man of you will come back rich and you won't have to work another day of your lives! Off for Cipango, gentlemen! We need you, too, young man!"

That there was such an island, with palaces of gold, trees that bore spices, and shores stoned with pearls bigger than those on the Queen's necklace, was a matter of proven knowledge to the most ignorant of the time! Why, indeed, shouldn't a poor man have a chance? Martin Alonso's enthusiasm, expressed in an Andalucian language increasingly imaginative and hyperbolic, soon caught all these humble folk who had been so ready to

laugh, a week before, at "the foreigner" and his royal patents. Pinzon was a man who knew how to make money—he had made it! And he was going, with his brothers and others of his family! This, after all, was the main point with the people of Palos and Moguer, and the men who gave their names and took their money began to have contempt for any afraid to follow their example.

And now, when everything seemed so rosy for don Cristobal, the prospects of the two lovers were suddenly disturbed, even more menacing dangers gathering about them. Among the various individuals who were beginning to linger about don Cristobal assuming importance to themselves through association with the "captain-general of the fleet," there was one, in particular, who attracted attention by his pompous demeanor toward the more humble members of the expedition and his craven adulation of the leader, always referring to the latter, quite prematurely, as "My Lord, the Admiral." The man had a soft unctuous manner of speaking; but this affected benevolence vanished the moment he chanced to be alone with a subordinate. The celibacy of which he boasted seemed somehow to exacerbate his angry moods with a sort of feminine hysteria; and the instinct for gallant flattery which most men gratify through courtship of women took, in his case, the turn of adulating the great and cruelly abusing those who did not humor him nor fear him.

His name was Pedro de Terreros. He had come on from Cordoba with a request from Pero Gonzalez that he be made don Cristobal's personal valet during the voyage. Terreros had at once assumed the title of *maestre-sala*, "master-at-table," or "waiter on the lord's person"—an important post in the feudal hierarchy.

Fernando Cuevas and Lucero were the particular marks of the man's hostility. The fact that they had arrived in the master's personal service before him was an unpardonable fault in his eyes, and he lost no occasion to speak ill of them, representing the slightest of their oversights as ruinous errors which made them unfit for the "Admiral's" favor. Cuevas was an uncouth ill-mannered fellow who might be useful scrubbing decks but was in no sense the sort of person to attend the inhabitants of an after-castle! The one they called Lucero, on the other hand, was too weak and sickly—he would be a nuisance rather than a help the moment they got out to sea.

However, don Cristobal was preoccupied, at the moment, with the many problems of the voyage, and paid no particular attention to the man's complaints. As for Salcedo, he thought he would keep him as a cabin steward aft—he had grown accustomed to his services, and it would be a nuisance to break another boy in. Besides, Dieguito had grown very fond of this young man of such gentle manners, a fact which raised the page in don Cristobal's esteem and inclined him to be kind to the boy. On the other hand, it might be better to let the other boy, Diego Alcanices go. He had not reported for work for a long time, and there was no particular reason to bother further with him.

Terreros made haste to dismiss Cuevas at once, ordering him to keep away from the convent. It was all the Master-at-table could do to stand the other young fellow, who would be sailing in spite of everything! It did little good for Fernando to loiter about the approaches to La Rábida during several days' time. Terreros was always in evidence somewhere, able to prevent any interview between the two lovers. Fernando, never-

theless, could not dream of letting the young girl sail with the fleet leaving him ashore behind. That would mean losing her forever! It would be necessary rather for them both to set out again on the wanderings they had begun, facing the same dangers they had already encountered in Seville, Cordoba, and elsewhere.

Cuevas was thinking of all these things when something happened which made him decide to put the voyage and don Cristobal out of his mind and to get away as soon as he could with Lucero. He was sitting one afternoon on the beach of the basin at Palos, his back propped against the bilge of a vessel which had been grounded out on the strand, when he saw at a distance an impressively dressed individual, walking pompously along, a hand resting on the hilt of a sword to throw up the cape behind, while the other was weighing heavily on a cane, as though the man were a convalescent recovering from a recent illness. With the gentleman were on the one side don Cristobal, and on the other, señor Martin Alonso.

Fernando's heart came into his throat. It was none other than the Royal Butler, Gonzalez, friend to don Cristobal, and "patron" of the man Terreros. For a moment he was tempted to hide inside the boat; but then he decided he ought to follow the party of three to see what was happening. The people of the water front were quick to learn the names and qualifications of anyone connected with the exciting voyage; and Cuevas did not have to wait long before he found someone to tell him all about the new arrival:

"He is a very powerful person," said a sailor to him, knowingly—"a man from Court, who is here helping the captain-general to sail as soon as possible. It seems there's some hitch over bills and equipment. Señor Martin Alonso is putting up seven thousand of his own; and

this man—they say he is richer than the Jew, don Abraham Señor—will put in as much as twenty."

And the sailors stood around in groups looking enviously and admiringly after Gonzalez as he passed.

This was enough for Cuevas. He took to his heels and fled from the neighborhood of the port. Here was the one person, now in close proximity to don Cristobal, who could recognize him, and still worse, recognize Lucero! It was necessary to flee without delay!

He hurried as fast as he could to the convent at La Rábida, arriving there about nightfall and as usual finding the inevitable Terreros on watch outside the gate. The new Master-at-table saw from the expression on Fernando's face that something serious had occurred and that it would be unwise to prevent him from seeing his brother, Salcedo. In fact he offered to go and tell Lucero himself when Cuevas asked to see don Cristobal's page.

Lucero appeared, and the two lovers walked away from the convent to be able to talk more freely. Cuevas told her she must get together the few little articles which she had acquired in Cordoba and Seville, thanks to the generosity of don Cristobal, and have them packed that very night:

"We must run for our lives," he said. "I have just seen the Royal Butler down on the beach. He has come to Palos. I will meet you here in the morning at dawn. We can only pray God that he will not desert us! . . . And we had thought we were so safe and happy here!"

CHAPTER VI

"IN THE NAME OF GOD . . . LET GO!"

It was already daylight when Cuevas set out from the house of the sacristan, hurrying at quickened pace since Lucero would doubtless be awaiting him at the designated spot in the neighborhood of La Rábida. As he passed the Basin he looked out over the water toward the ships that lay at anchor there reflecting the first faint rose of dawn on their sails. The evening before he could hardly wait to be free of this place called Palos. Now his heart was filled with bitterness that the presence of one hateful individual should be able to cheat him of the voyage to the marvelous lands of Asia. Again all the thrill of Adventure came home to him: could he miss the chance of winning all that honor and wealth, which perhaps was within his grasp in the realms of the Grand Khan?

The streets of Palos were deserted. Only on the water could a few sounds of life be heard—sailors calling, as they awoke, from one ship to another. But suddenly a voice came from behind him, a deep voice modulated to the soft accent of Andalucia:

"And where are we going so early in the morning, Mister Man?"

Cuevas turned and could hardly believe his eyes: señor Martin Alonso Pinzon, bidding him good morning with a cheery familiarity which that distinguished captain might have had for an equal! The joy of the

cool sunrise seemed to have diffused a childlike good will over people and things, bridging the social gap between master and deck boy. Doubtless the man whom everybody called "Pinzon the Elder" must have recognized Fernando's face from having seen him about the water front, though he could not have known his name. But on noticing the canvas sack, in which the young man had stowed his things, and the stick which he was using as a cane, he could not restrain his surprise, reproving him with the affectionate severity of a kind-hearted chief:

"What, deserting the voyage? Shame on you! . . . A boy with your muscle and your stout heart—don't you want to come to Cipango and the Indies and get rich with the rest of us?"

Pinzon's words were an echo of thoughts that had been stirring in Fernando's mind, and they gave him courage to explain to the famous shipmaster who he was and what had happened to him: don Cristobal had dismissed him as his valet, because of Terreros, the Master-at-table, who did not like him. He was indeed eager to join the expedition, but now there was nothing to do but go away with his little brother—they could not say where, except that they must not be separated!

"You will do in the forecastle of any of the ships," replied Pinzon. "You are a sturdy lad. You may not know much about the sea, but you can begin as a green hand, helping the able seamen at their work. They will kick you around a bit, but they are good fellows at heart!"

Cuevas answered that he would be glad to enlist in any capacity, provided he could go with his brother, who would be with don Cristobal; but it would not be easy to join. Diego de Arana was presiding at the table and to justify his new charge was requiring no end of

passports, references, and bonds, before accepting any of the volunteers who presented themselves. Furthermore it was the custom for men shipping at sea, whether as able or ordinary seamen or just as green hands to find someone to go surety for their good conduct and for the advance in wages that was paid them on enrolment. He knew no one of importance in Palos who would vouch for him.

Pinzon looked him over for a moment from head to foot, and then he said in a tone that he used on the quarter-deck:

"Go back to your lodgings, boy; jettison your bag and that stick; and when the table opens in the square come and speak to me. You will find me somewhere around. Just now I am on my way to my brother's, Vicente Yañez. A friend of mine came to Palos yesterday. He is leaving again just after breakfast. After that I shall be free."

And with this excuse, made as from one equal to another, he walked away, his face darkening it seemed with a sudden worry as he thought of this early morning traveller.

After returning his belongings to his quarters with the sacristan Fernando ran all the way to La Rábida to find Lucero and tell her of his admission to the fleet, this time as seaman's apprentice, since they would not have him aft. The two lovers enjoyed for a moment the happy hopefulness of earlier days—they would embark together after all! But then the image of the ex-Royal Butler came again to cloud their thoughts. If their persecutor stayed on in Palos, even the protection of Pinzon the Elder would be of little avail. Gonzalez would denounce Cuevas to the authorities the moment he set eyes on him, and it would be impossible to avoid such

a meeting in such a small town, especially if Fernando had to attend to his duties. There was still one hope—the chance that Pinzon's last words had referred to the once Royal Butler.

On returning to the Port, Fernando had to halt at a street corner to avoid passing in front of a white painted house where he caught sight of the man Terreros. The Master-at-table to the captain-general was conversing in a demeanor of great deference, with the Royal Butler, the latter dressed in his riding clothes and mounted already on a horse. In the doorway of the house stood the Younger Pinzon, Vicente Yañez, bidding Gonzalez good-bye. After a time the Butler rode away, pricking his horse to a gallop for the benefit of those sailors so little versed in such knightly forms of locomotion.

The moment he was out of sight, Cuevas stepped forward to meet Terreros. The latter was still so much affected by the departure of his patron that he needed to expand in the presence of the young man:

"My lord, don Pedro, is off to Seville and Cordoba to get his money. The million *maravedis* assigned by Their Highnesses have been spent and there are still many expenses to meet before the expedition can sail. They say señor Martin Alonso Pinzon will give something; but it will really be my lord, don Pedro, who will relieve my lord the Admiral from this embarrassment."

As Cuevas went from group to group about the town, he found don Cristobal's financial difficulties the sole topic of conversation, especially among the friends and relatives of Pinzon: the eleven hundred and forty thousand *maravedis* Santangel had paid over to the expedition in the name of the Sovereigns were falling far short of actual needs. That money had gone into repairs, remodeling, equipment, and advances to the crews. There

were many bills outstanding, and food supplies had not yet been put aboard for a voyage that was figured as for a year at least. A half million more was necessary; and without that amount, don Cristobal's creditors would not allow his vessels to clear the port!

Even the Warden of La Rábida thought it useless to write to the Queen again for further support. Don Cristobal and his enterprise would be already half forgotten by Their Highnesses in the midst of so many other affairs of more pressing importance, and it would take months to set all the processes in motion to arouse new enthusiasm among the people at Court and obtain new audiences with the Sovereigns.

There was a worried look on Martin Alonso's face. He had seen, during the interviews of the day before, that Gonzalez, don Cristobal's "friend from Court," was a grasping boastful person, on whose aid little reliance could be placed. Though the Butler had gone away promising to return with funds aplenty, Pinzon guessed that he might bring a few thousand *maravedis* at the most. But soon the Shipmaster of Palos was going about as good-humored, as enthusiastic, as confident as ever. If it took another half million to get at those gold-roofed houses in Cipango, he was going to find it! And to be sure, within a few days he had his money. The report was that he had taken his own savings, borrowing the rest from the more well-to-do members of his family. When some of the Pinzons asked Martin Alonso about the conditions of his partnership with "the foreigner" they were surprised to learn that there existed no written contract; but the Andalucian captain replied:

"I have his word, and that's enough for me! We are two sailors going as brothers on an expedition together,

in the face of death. What more do you want? A man's word is worth more on the sea than it is on land. We leave mortgages and contracts to the landlubbers."

Pinzon forgot his troubles for a moment on catching sight of Cuevas in the square; and taking the boy by the ear in jocular arrest he haled him to the enrolment table:

"Put this young fellow down as a green hand. He will sail on the 'Marigalante' with señor Juan de la Cosa. I go bond for him."

And the pretended Diego Alcañices saw his name at once included on the lists of the crews. His advance in pay was more coin that he could hold in his two hands—a sum such as he had never dreamed of owning in his life!

At the same time señor Martin Alonso also went bond for an Englishman and an Irishman who for some months had been wandering as vagabonds about the waterfronts of Palos and Huelva. Perhaps they had been put ashore from ships of their own country because of their unruliness; or they may have been deserters. At any rate they came from different vessels and had finally joined company in this foreign land with frequent intervals of friendship and estrangement. The golden wine of Andalucia seemed to be holding them on this faraway shore. About the taverns on the basin they could always find someone to give them a drink for the fun of hearing them jabber in a strange tongue with admixtures of rare or unheard of Spanish words comically pronounced. When down on their luck, the Englishman and the Irishman seemed to be great friends, their poverty bringing them together as brothers. But a few glasses of wine would set them quarreling, to the immense delight of their Spanish hosts. They had often visited the gaol in

Palos, as a result of violations of the public peace, but never without finding some respectable citizen willing to go their bond.

They were popular fellows, this Englishman and this Irishman, welcome in the haunts of the native sailors all along the coast. Attracted by the heaps of gold on the enrolment table, and inspired by the applause which greeted each enlistment as an act of courage, they had repeatedly volunteered their services; but each time, Diego de Arana, exercising his functions as censor of morals among the crews, had driven them off with flourishes of his sword. It seemed presumptuous to him that two homeless drunkards should try to join an enterprise of honest people. Señor Martin Alonso, always inclined to sympathize with the under dog, finally accepted them because of their insistence at the table. He signed as bondsman for them both, and became responsible for their advance. As seamen they were known to be as good as any along the shore. He would trust them not to desert before the fleet weighed anchor! So the Englishman and the Irishman both figured on the rolls, but under names much hispanized: the Irishman as "Guillermo Ires de Garvey," and the Englishman, as "Tallarte de Lages."

Martin Alonso was taking the lead in everything, whether in the assembling of crews or in fitting the ships. The two caravels which don Cristobal had conscripted did not seem to him just the ones for the journey, and he released them, to choose strongly built ones more to his own liking. His preference fell on the most seaworthy and best built caravels on the two rivers—the "Pinta" and the "Niña," so named after their owners, respectively, a Pinto and a Niño.

The caravel was the fastest sailer of that day. Of

Portuguese design originally, all nations had adopted it after the voyages down the coasts of Africa had demonstrated its merits. The logs of caravels of this period show runs of three hundred miles and upwards for a twenty-four hour day. Martin Alonso favored the caravel for exploration especially—it was a speedier boat, and its sails could be easily worked under difficulties. If its lightness of timber was gained at the expense of seaworthiness, that seemed of little moment to a master as expert as he. In his judgment, if a third ship were necessary, it ought to be a caravel.

Not so don Cristobal! He wanted a real ship! As captain-general of the fleet he should have a larger craft than the others. The "Marigalante," a *nao*, or full rigger, the only vessel of two hundred tons in port, was just the thing! It was an easy matter to come to an understanding with her skipper, Juan de la Cosa. The moment the associate discoverers mentioned Antilia and Cipango, that sturdy Basque was ready. They could have his boat, and his own services therewith—though owner and captain in his own right, he would be perfectly willing to go as mate. The money for the ship? There was no hurry about that. He would get his money from Their Highnesses after he got back! Nor did this mariner of the North think he was taking any great risk. Like Pinzon, he believed in a place called Cipango, where the houses had shingles of gold!

On reporting aboard the flagship, Cuevas was directed first to the new mate, señor Juan de la Cosa, a heavy, smiling-faced man, sparing of words, who won his confidence at once. It was as though Cuevas could sense in this rough sailor of the Bay of Biscay the man who was to prove the most expert pilot of the New World and the tutor of Amerigo Vespucci! Señor Juan de la Cosa

at once introduced the new green hand to the "warden", or chief-steward, who was in immediate charge of deck scrubbers and apprentices. Cuevas discovered that his official title was to be "broom-boy," a grade below the sailor's assitants, or apprentices proper.

The warden was a talkative old timer named Gil Perez, and he at once began lecturing the newly arrived greenhorn on the peculiarities of his ship:

"She won't be named 'Marigalante' any more, The captain-general is a pious man, and wishes to scrape the last trace of irreverence from this voyage. Many girls about the waterfronts are called 'Marigalante.' He has changed our name to 'Santa Maria'."

Thereupon Gil Perez, in a tone that was harsh and kindly at the same time, explained the duties that devolved upon Fernando as "broom-boy." The "broom" kept the decks cleaned, trimmed the lanterns about the binnacle and on the quarter-deck, and learned by heart and chanted in tune certain rigmaroles that marked the principal divisions of the day and night and called for answers from the men on watch or at the helm.

Going their rounds of the ship, Cuevas and Gil Perez came to a chain stretched across decks amidships, dividing the space forward of the mainmast from the rest of the vessel:

"This chain," explained the warden, "is a chain of freedom, not of servitude, separating those who command from those who obey. Anyone in command can beat a sailor if he disobeys, or does his work badly, but only so long as the sailor is aft of the chain. The officer, can pursue his man this far, and the man may not strike back; but if the officer, on his part, passes this chain, the sailor is in his castle and may defend himself. Here the wrath of those in command finds a limit which does

not lessen their authority, and the patience of the subordinate a limit which does not disrupt discipline."

Don Cristobal had left the convent of La Rábida and installed headquarters, attended by his page, Lucero, and his Master-at-table, Terreros, in the after-castle of the now "Santa Maria"; but every evening he was spending ashore at the home of the old pilot Pero Vasquez, talking of earlier explorations out into the Atlantic, especially of the voyage to the "Sea of Grasses," which Vasquez himself had made thirty years before. Left for the most part free of serious work on their ship, Fernando and Lucero could be with each other more frequently and for longer periods than had been possible at La Rábida. But unfortunately this happy situation was not to last.

There was still one very important piece of business which don Cristobal had to attend to in Seville. Unable to go himself, he decided to entrust it to Terreros, who in his turn applied to señor Martin Alonso for a sturdy, active, intelligent young man to assist him. That Pinzon's choice should fall upon the "broom" named Diego Alcañices was at first a marked annoyance to the henchman of Gonzalez; though Terreros did not dare to go counter to the famous master's designation. Shortly it occurred to him that with Fernando under his personal orders he could more easily vent the spite he had harbored against the two brothers from the outset.

But this bad-will could not stand the test of the lonely journey to the metropolis, which Terreros and Cuevas made side by side on the mules which don Cristobal had bought in Cordoba and then sold to Cabezudo in Moguer. The long hours of riding gave the Master-at-table an inclination for friendly intercourse; nor could he escape a certain forceful something in Fernando's char-

acter that commanded respect as well as trust and affection.

"We are going to Seville," the man confided to Cuevas, "to call on Giannotto Berardi, one of the richest Genoese merchants at present doing business in Spain. However we shall probably deal mostly with his factotum, a Florentine named Amerigo Vespucci. Don Cristobal placed several orders with Vespucci some time ago, but since the things have not been delivered we are going after them."

A hope which the Master-at-table kept voicing was a source of great uneasiness to Cuevas: Terreros wondered whether he would be so fortunate as to meet his friend and patron, the former Royal Butler, Pero Gonzalez, in Seville. Good luck had time after time saved Fernando from meeting his persecutor, yet a sort of fatality seemed constantly to be bringing their paths together. The present situation would be worse than any of the preceding. This time he would have to save himself by flight, leaving Lucero all to herself on the "Santa Maria"! Hitherto they had been able to face all their dangers together!

So the three days in Seville were a memory of continuous terror to Cuevas. They saw Vespucci and then Giannotto Berardi, the famous banker, and the former finally delivered to them a number of very fragrant packages. There was no need for Vespucci to urge most attentive care in handling them. Each was worth its weight in gold! The packages contained samples in bulk of the best Asiatic spices Berardi's stores could supply —cinnamon, nutmeg, pepper, clove and ginger. Don Cristobal was to take them with him for comparisons in judging the goods that would probably be offered him in the lands of Eastern Asia whither he would arrive.

Terreros further took charge of a suit of clothes which Vespucci had ordered for don Cristobal from one of the most fashionable tailors in Seville. Everything about it was scarlet—the trousers, the cloak, and even the fur-lined cap! Since the time of Alfonso the Wise, the uniform of a Spanish Admiral had been of a dark red color. The sovereign provided in his famous "Articles" (*Partidas*) that the Admiral, "the man of experience who sails ships by his cunning, regardless of the winds, and is captain-general over all things pertaining to the sea" should don a uniform of scarlet, and after taking oath of fealty to the sovereign, be escorted aboard his galley with trumpets.

Fernando stowed the packages carefully in the panniers of his donkey, and, to his great relief, set out with Terreros on the return to Palos. They had seen nothing of Gonzalez!

Of don Alonso de Ojeda, Fernando had learned, on the other hand, quite unexpected news. The town was still talking about the exciting end to which his love story had come a week before. He had been living secretly in the city with the daughter of lawyer Herboso. Their presence there had been discovered, however, and a squad of soldiers under Garduña had suddenly descended upon them. The two women had been captured—doña Isabelita was now in prison in a convent at Cordoba, while the little Moorish girl was in a cell of the Inquisition; but the invincible don Alonso had beaten his way to freedom, cutting down the Sheriff's men to left and right and putting the others to rout. Now he was again a fugitive, wandering about from place to place, to the great worry and wrath of Herboso, who was more than ever resolved to see his daughter dead rather than the wife of such a law-breaker. It was evident to Fernando

that his hero, don Alonso, would not be his companion on the dangerous voyage. His great sorrow at that discovery had some little consolation in the concern which the Master-at-table evinced as to the whereabouts of Gonzalez. Not suspecting in the least that Cuevas knew the man, Terreros talked at length of the affairs of the Royal Butler.

"My lord, don Pedro, is a busy man, and he has other matters in hand quite as interesting to him as these difficulties of my lord, the Admiral. This don Alonso de Ojeda, of whom everybody in Seville is talking, is an enemy of his. They had an encounter in Cordoba in which don Pedro was hurt—by treachery, one need not say, for he is without a peer in combat, and as courageous as he is generous. There is also a question of a young Jewish girl named Lucero, who ran away from Andujar with a boy named Cuevas. Don Pedro has set his heart on finding them, and has probably discovered a clue which he is running down. That is probably the reason why we did not find him in Seville. We may be sure that long before this don Pedro has sent my lord the Admiral all the money needed for the voyage and more besides!"

Just outside the walls of Seville Cuevas and his companion came upon a marching crowd so thick that they could not make their way through it and had to turn off into a side road till the highway had cleared. It was not difficult to identify the character of the throng. It was an army of Jewish exiles on their way to embark at the Basin of Santa Maria. There twenty-five ships, seven of them full riggers, were waiting to carry them away. Commander of the fleet was Pero Cabron, a captain famous for his voyages as corsair, and his many trips through the Portuguese blockade off the coasts of Guinea.

Terreros looked with a gesture of contempt upon this ragged procession of human beings which flowed slowly by in an unending line like a river of misery. Hard of heart, instinctively loathing failure and running to the winning side, he could accept without misgivings any dominant idea. Fernando could think only of Lucero as he saw gliding past the head of his horse now boys and girls, now men and women, some on foot, others on donkeys or horses which they had bought at the last moment for a house or a farm that represented the earnings of a lifetime. Whole families could be seen huddled into one cart and overflowing the edges like human grapevines. "Thus," says a chronicler of the time, the curate de los Palacios, "thus they departed, in great hardship and with great heaviness of heart, along the highways, across the fields, some falling, others rising to their feet, some dying, others coming into the world, the sick and the well alike, till there was no Christian man or woman whose heart was not wrenched thereat."

The Master-at-table of "my lord the Admiral" jeered the passing lines:

"Good for Their Highnesses," he cried aloud. "They are doing well to be rid of such people! Not one of them could dig a ditch, or plow a field, or lay a brick, or spike a timber! These were the seekers after offices of ease, where there was much money and little work—a shrewd crew of cheaters, who enriched themselves on usury from the Christians to buy the best houses in town and country and possess themselves of the best lands! We shall all live the better for their departure! Death to the Jews and to all who frequent them!"

When Cuevas arrived back in Palos, the fleet was ready to set sail. The two caravels and the full-rigger

were lying at anchor outside the basin on the so-called "Flats of Domingo Rubio," with the Convent of La Rábida close at hand on a point. Provisions for a year were being taken aboard, and this unusual larding gave an atmosphere of great activity to the village. Long lines of pack animals were coming down the highway into town, bringing bags of dried vegetables, dried meats, and other footstuffs traditionally fed to the crews at sea. Close to the waterfront, at the foot of the hill on which the village of Palos itself lay, the crews were busily filling their water casks at "the Spring," so called, a well covered by a brick structure of four pillars and a roof, that the water might lie open to the air and still be sheltered from the sun. Sailors and deck scrubbers were rolling the barrels down to the shore and putting them aboard the tenders of their respective ships. Others were helping unload the pack animals and the carts, gazing with satisfaction and uneasiness at the same time upon such unusual quantities of victuals.

On the second of August fell the traditional festival of Our Lady of La Rábida; but this year, it was celebrated with greater solemnity than ever, because the flotilla was to weigh anchor the next day. Most of the crew walked to the convent to attend Mass, and many of them confessed and took communion, along with the captain-general. Cuevas and Lucero, like other common sailors of the fleet, were thereafter confined to their ship. As the hour for sailing approached the three captains, don Cristobal, Martin Alonso, and Vicente Yañez Pinzon, thought it best that their crews should not be in contact with people ashore.

Late that afternoon the two lovers, standing at the rail, saw several trunks come aboard, to be deposited in the cabin aft. They were the baggage of various civil-

ians, among them Diego de Arana, and of two Royal Commissioners who were joining the expedition as personal representatives of the Sovereigns. These gentlemen, along with the other late recruits, were at the Convent with don Cristobal, and would not board the flagship till after nightfall.

On the following morning, the third of August, a half hour before sunrise, the three vessels hoisted their boats aboard, cutting off the last ties with land. The hundred and twenty men who made up the expedition, only ninety of them mariners, were already at their posts on the two caravels and on the "Santa Maria."

On the shore beyond "the Flats" on which the flotilla lay at anchor, a crowd had gathered—the Warden of La Rábida with some of his friars; the physician, Garci Hernandez; Cabezudo the farmer; the aged Pero Vasquez with other retired sea-captains; little Diego, don Cristobal's son, who a few days later would be back in Cordoba; and then the families of the sailors aboard.

Some of the women were shedding their tears in silence; but others were screaming and wailing with true Andalucian expansiveness, lifting their voices like professional mourners at a funeral. Supplies for a year! To India! Across the Ocean! Who would ever come back from such a voyage? And not a few cursed this "foreigner" who had come to Palos to bring misfortune upon them all!

The old seamen on shore tried to hush this sorrow of ill-omen. Wasn't everyone going of his own free will? How about señor Martin Alonso, and his brothers and cousins—people with money, who didn't have to take chances that were not good ones! And there was the doctor, and the Warden of the Rábida! Hadn't they found this voyage a capital idea? They were men who

knew! This was an affair for men, and only men should talk about it! Women had better hold their tongues or go home!

On the poops of the three little vessels, near the lights that tipped the superstructures, the captains could be seen standing at their posts. The apprentices were all aloft on the yards untying the sails. The cabestans were creaking as they drew in and coiled the cables of the anchors.

The sun came up, sprinkling with fiery fishes the muddy waters of the *rio Tinto* and the green flood that was rippling over the Saltes bar beyond the confluence of the two streams. The freshly pitched hulls of the three ships gleamed like burnished metal.

Don Cristobal had been waiting for years for this moment. As though in greeting to the sun, he slowly doffed his cap, bowed his head, and then, lifting his eyes to the rigging of his ship, called in a solemn voice:

"In the name of God . . . let go. . . ."

Across the water, as in double echo, came the voices of the two Pinzons:

"Let go . . . in the name of God . . . let go!"

The sheets slackened. The sails fell and unfurled. Each of the square sails had a great cross, red and black, painted about its center. They flapped noisily about till the wind caught them full and bellied them outward.

A favorable wind had risen with the dawn, and the three vessels, now in line, nosed through the chop, gracefully pitching, but cutting the roughened surface of the *Tinto* with increasing speed. Upright on the shore, an arm raised on high, stood Father Juan Perez, cutting the air with signs of the Cross in parting benediction. Some of those about him had fallen to their knees.

Crowds of urchins and apprentices from vessels in port ran along the river bank, trying to keep abreast of the receding caravels.

On board one of these, some sailors had begun to chant the "Salve regina" as was the custom on Spanish craft, but usually in the evening. In faint response came the wails of the women, making their way slowly back to Palos.

For three hours the Warden and his friends stood on the point near the Convent, watching the little fleet grow smaller and smaller in the distance. Now the three vessels had left the mouth of the two rivers, and were crossing the Saltes bar between the island and the mainland. Now they were out in the clear water of the Ocean, three specks, white as sea-gulls, on the far horizon.

But on the open sea, outside the port of Palos, the Squadron of Discovery sighted sails—a fleet of twenty-five ships, their prows turned toward Africa. These vessels were crowded with passengers. Their decks seemed armored with scales that were human heads crowded together into one unbroken sheet of humanity.

It was a whole people, miserable, heart-broken, sobbing, but yet lifting to the skies the last chants of its dying enthusiasm, a people outcast by religious hatreds, and on its way toward still bitterer persecutions and abuse. It was Pero Cabron's fleet, off for Morocco! Spain was voluntarily dispensing with thousands of skilled and industrious workers at a time when a mere handful of Spaniards was dashing out into the mysterious Ocean in search of new lands and magic riches!

The Squadron of Exile, made up, as it were, of floating coffins resonant with the wails of unburied dead, vanished in the direction of Africa.

The Squadron of Discovery—two caravels and a ship,

with the Cross painted on their sails, and with flags flying at each mast head and from the staffs on the poops —headed away toward the Canaries, the Fortunate Isles of the ancients.

Thence it would veer out into the Ocean on the track of Gold, Lord of the Earth, of spices that tickled the palates of men like ambrosia from the gods, of palaces inlaid with pearls and fiery gems, of isles and continents swarming with elephants, monkeys, men without heads and giants with one eye—lands of miracle governed by the Grand Khan of Tartary, "King of Kings."

Unluckily, the Grand Khan of Tartary, known to Marco Polo and described by Mandeville, had been overthrown in the year one thousand three hundred and sixty-eight by the Mings of China! Unluckily he had been dead for just one hundred and twenty-four years!

At noon the deck boys of the flagship received their order to sing the call to the midday meal. Cuevas could hardly restrain a laugh as he heard the shrill girlish voice of Lucero summoning the captain-general and his company to be seated at their tables aft.

Terreros stood at don Cristobal's elbow supervising the personal service of "my lord the Admiral." It was Lucero's duty to bring the great platters to the table and to go the rounds with the wine. As she helped the men, one by one, she looked around the company studying the different faces. Some she had already seen at Palos; others had arrived the evening before the departure. But in the chair next to the captain-general sat an individual conspicuous among the others for the splendor of his attire and his many ornaments of gold. He ate for the most part with lowered head and paid no attention to the pages who were serving. But just as Lucero's

eyes fell on him, he raised his head and looked back, indifferently, at her.

But the two gazes became more insistent and intense. Lucero had to make an effort of will to keep from dropping the great platter from which she had been helping the various gentlemen. The brilliant knight also tried to conceal his emotion, though the knife which he held in his right hand trembled in spite of him.

Lucero had recognized Pero Gonzales and he had seen in her the fugitive Jewess of Andujar!

He had sought her everywhere, but in vain! Now he was meeting her here, quite unexpectedly, on board this little ship sailing out into the Unknown! . . .

However, one thing was certain: the girl would not escape for a long while! And this reflection brought a smile of cruel satisfaction to the Royal Butler's lips!

No, he would not speak. It would serve his purposes better to say nothing, abetting the girl in keeping her secret! Gonzalez now had time on his side, and time would enable him to have his way with her!

CHAPTER VII

THE VOW

For Fernando Cuevas, "broom boy," the first hours at sea had all the delights of novelty. Back and forth he went from one side of the ship to the other, instinctively arching his legs, digging into the deck with his toes, to keep his body in rhythm with the rolling of the vessel under its heavy spread of sail. During the days just previous he had often looked uneasily forward to the completely new life that was to begin for him. Now, with this cool salt breeze in his nostrils, with the spectacle of the two caravels before his eyes, speeding forward with all their canvas set, the "Niña" nearby, the faster "Pinta" far in the lead of her sisters, he felt as though one violent pull had lifted him in a few hours from boyhood to full maturity.

At the moment there were no urgent chores—the decks still showed the effects of the scrubbing they had been given late the night before. From the forecastle, or walking about among the groups of sailors sprawled on the deck amidships, he would look up to the lofty castle aft, where the captain-general was quartered with all those attached to his personal service. His one desire was to see Lucero, and he did catch frequent glimpses of her; for the girl, in executing her orders as valet, was often passing from one cabin to another to assemble and unpack the belongings of her master.

Noontime came on, and the different boys had to sing out their call "To table!" Going "to table," for the men before the mast, meant falling into designated circles or masses on the deck, three groups respectively headed by the second mate, the ship-warden, and either the chief bombardier, or the ship-carpenter. The men ate in various postures, some sitting flat on the deck, their legs in front of them, others squatting on their haunches, others lounging on their elbows, all of them, after making the sign of the cross over the mess-kettle, taking out the knives which would serve them as forks. Friday though it was, the crew was not to be fed with beans cooked in sea-water—the regulation fare on fast days. In honor of the beginning of the voyage, and through a dispensation procured by Father Perez, there trembled in each wooden scuttle a large piece of fresh meat boiled with rice. Around each circle moved a "broom" with a huge wooden jar called the *chipi-chape* from which he kept pouring wine into the *galletas*, or wooden mess-bowls, which had been given to each sailor to be kept as his own. Supplies were still fresh. The meal might have been served on land—it was probably more bountiful than the sailors could have afforded in their own homes. The wine was not watered as yet—the pantryman could still be generous in the rations. And all this, added to the favorable breeze that was pushing the vessels onward, created an atmosphere of cheerfulness on board which showed in all hands.

Fernando ate with the others of his class after the sailors and apprentices had finished. "Brooms" who had been on other voyages tried to impress the green hands with tales of keel-hauling, of lashings, of imprisonment in the dark without food, and of all the other forms of discipline that weighed upon those at the bottom of the

social ladder on board. But the splendor of the day seemed to take the horror from these blood-curdling narratives of the harsh life at sea, leaving a general mood of gaiety and goodwill.

But just when Fernando was feeling most cheerful from this first abundant and satisfying meal things abruptly changed for him. Everything—people and objects—seemed suddenly to start whirling, each one multiplied into numerous copies, inside a dull gray mist that was like a twilight, though the sun was still high in the heavens. And he thought, also, that he saw Lucero appear for brief moments at one of the doors of the after-castle, pale and haggard as though she had received a mortal blow, throwing a hand to her throat and disappearing again. What surprised him, vaguely, was his indifference to this plight, and this flight, of his beloved. Through the ringing in his ears, and despite an uncontrollable weariness which inclined him to lie down on the bare deck and go to sleep, he heard the mocking voice of an older and more experienced "broom":

"Ho, Andujar is as green as grass! Ho, Andujar, you are blue around the gills!"

An old custom of the Spanish forecastle was to ignore family names, and call each man either by some fantastic or descriptive nickname, or after the town from which he came. For the company aboard the "Santa Maria," the green "broom" was already "Andujar."

Fernando tried to bear up under the rolling of the deck by clinging to a rope, with his head over the rail. A vain effort! He was soon so weak that he lost his hold and collapsed in a helpless heap on the deck. The shipwarden came up cursing holy horror at this event:

"Into the bunk-room, forward, with this landlubber!

Here he is dirtying up our house! Holy vineyards, what will he do if a breeze of wind comes?"

Fernando had the feeling of being lifted to a great height and then let fall to an even greater depth. He knew simply that at last he struck a mattress and that it felt deliciously soft.

When he awoke, he did not know how many hours later, everything was dark about him; but on raising his head he could distinguish the flicker of a lean candle sheltered under a lantern, and beyond that, a dark gallery which he knew must be the continuation of this marine dormitory into which he had been thrown. He was too weak to move; and the prostration gave him a sort of acute pleasure. How wonderful if he could lie thus till the end of the voyage! From afar came the strains of a song, sung by deep male voices—the "Salve regina" chanted at fall of night by all on board! So then, supper was over! Supper came just before dark, to avoid the necessity of lights!

The picture of a full wooden scuttle came up in his mind, and set his stomach to squirming again! He fell back on the mattress, letting his eyes roam about for a time over the rhythmically moving planks on which his blankets were spread. Then he turned over on his other side with the comfortable reflection that he would go to sleep again.

But his ears caught the sound of creaking planks, and of footsteps rapidly approaching. Out of the dark came a "broom" of his mess, and the boy called:

"Ho, Andujar! On deck! On deck! It's our turn on watch!"

Fernando was enough alive to understand that "watch" meant three hours of work on deck; but it seemed to him something unheard of and utterly unrea-

sonable that a man in his condition should be called upon for any such thing. When the boy repeated the call, he turned over on his other side and sleepily answered that he couldn't dream of getting up, even if the captain-general himself were to come and tell him to.

The "broom" vanished; but shortly the planking began to shake with a louder and heavier step. It was Gil Perez, the ship-warden, swearing like a pirate:

"So you won't get up, eh, you short-horned landlubber? Even for the captain-general, eh! Where are we, holy vineyards, at home with mamma, sucking wine and sugar from a bottle? Up with you, gosling, by San Fernando! It's your watch on deck!"

Fernando couldn't—he couldn't! Much better to throw him overboard, where at least he could die! With half his wits about him in his stupor, the thought of rising to his feet on that writhing deck seemed something he could never do.

Gil Perez was dumfounded! He was accustomed to being obeyed by this crowd of playful wilful youngsters, ever ready to go astray if given half a chance. He shouted a sharp command:

"Here boys, give a hoist to this pair of legs!"

A number of "brooms" and apprentices were standing by, laughing, to see what "the boss" was going to do to this greenhorn.

Fernando felt the cold clutch of something rough and prickly about his bare ankle; and a second later came a pull, while peals of laughter echoed through the dark spaces below deck as all the "brooms" of the watch came running up to witness or to assist at this "singing-lesson."

The "singing-lesson" (*Saloma*) was a song, chanted by the eldest, or at least, by the leader of the "brooms,"

while the others, keeping time with the verses, pulled a rope that was tied to the foot of the victim. Thus they hauled the latter over the deck, much as they would raise a sail or take in a hawser. The song was in the Levantine "lingua franca" peculiar to the Mediterranean:

Ho, Saint Peter, a great man was he;
Ho, at Rome sinners sit at his knee;
Ho, and Saint Paul, as good as they make 'em!
Ho, and their prayers are for those who will take 'em!
Ho, ask them to pray for all brave sailormen—
Ho, in our crowd there's as many as ten . . .

And each "ho" corresponded with a hard pull at Fernando's leg, which dragged him at least his length over the deck. Now colliding with a stool, now with the leg of a tier of bunks, now with a coil of rope, his elbow barely saving his head from a wicked scratch on a gun carriage, the boy was at last conscious of being in the open air, probably on the main deck, amidships. The cool air revived him, and since the pulls had ceased, he sat painfully up:

"Please, señor Gil Perez," he murmured, "I feel better! Please let me get up. I will do my duty on watch."

The warden was expecting some such surrender, and ordered the "brooms" to slacken the rope about the boy's leg. Then he reached down, and his hard muscles lifted Fernando to his feet. The young man was astonished at his own sudden vigor. He felt weak, but his head was clear, his will strong. It was as though shame and fright had cured him forever of the danger of seasickness.

He was ordered astern with another "broom" to watch the hour glass for the whole watch. The glass had to be turned every half hour. Then the boys were to see that

the sand kept flowing, and they were told to shake the apparatus if there were any signs of its clogging. Since this was a night watch, Fernando had not yet seen the full round of such duty, which consisted, at nightfall, in bringing fire from the gallery hearth to light the lamp in the binnacle, that navigator and helmsman might follow the needle, and the "brooms" on watch "at the bottle"—so the hour glass was called—might have a clear view of their sand. Moreover when the "brooms" began their watch they had to "sing out":

Blessed the hour when God was born,
Blessed Saint Mary who gave him birth . . .
Blessed Saint John who gave him baptism . . .
The watch is on guard . . .
The bottle is flowing . . .
All's well with the voyage,
God willing . . .

Just as the last grain of sand fell into the lower half of "the bottle," one of the two "brooms" had to "sing out," and loud enough to be heard at the forward end of the ship:

Good the hour past,
Better the hour coming . . .
One has flowed
And two is flowing . . .
And more will flow, God willing.
Count one, count two,
A good voyage to you . . .
Ho, at the bow, eyes to the fore . . .
A good watch to you . . .

And the lookout at the bow had to answer, with a cry, or at least a grunt, as evidence that he was not asleep.

at midnight, the "Dragon" or watch "on the battle" d to call the subject of the new watch, or "quarter," ey would work the ship till dawn:

"To the mainsail, to the mainsail, good mariners, God bless you.
"To the mainsail with my lord, the Captain, for the love of Christ.
"To the sails, to the sails, to the sails!"

Bartholomew passed the first watch in restful inaction. e felt like a different person from that hideous indi- dual who had been dragged, half dead, from the hold ere in the Barracuda. His main concern was to keep ose killing anger, and this he succeeded in doing by ding to his bunk with the "Dragon" at his side. The ttermost stood a few paces away, his eyes on the com- ss, warning the killer every so often to bring the ship all to her course.

The companion on watch was a lively, talkative little low, who already knew all about the "Santa Maria" d the people who were aboard. In addition to the regu- officers there stood at the service of the fleet as a ole, a doctor, "Master Simon," a surgeon, "Master ael," and an apothecary and barber, called "Master ugo." The last would serve also Columbus as an as- ant, when the ships reached the lands of the Grand han, that there might be no trouble in identifying the ce that produced the rich spices of Asia. Of the four- n and twenty men with the fleet only six were foreign- s, the Englishmen, Logre and the Irishman, Conroy, ree Portuguese between the two vessels, and an ilian sailor, so the English called Giovanni di Bari r di Bari. Now saddened by his recollection of the

of his supposed savings. Don Cristobal had kept him aboard the Santa Maria, probably because he had lent him part of the money which had permitted him to buy an eighth interest in the expedition. Most of the people of importance ashore who were going on the voyage had been assigned to the flagship, and were then asleep under the parqueted floor on which the two brooms were standing.

Fernando's watch came to an end at midnight. He allowed his companion to run off to bed in the forecastle, while he lingered in the darkness on the main deck as near as he dared to the superstructure aft. Finally he found a good opportunity to slip through one of the doors of the after-castle into the large cabin that served as living and dining room for the privileged denizens of the poop. In the silence he was finally conscious of a faint measured breathing, and bending over he was able to recognize Lucero, sleeping on two mattresses which she had laid on the floor just to one side of don Cristobal's cabin.

This arrangement they had made before leaving Palos, and Lucero had obtained don Cristobal's consent on the pretext that if she laid her bed each night at his door, she could be more easily reached in case he should need anything. The regular quarters for all servants aft were in a bunk room in charge of the "Master-at-table."

Taking the false page's hands and touching her forehead, Fernando found them cold and moist. Alas, Lucero was as seasick as he had been before his rough treatment at the hands of the ship-warden!

"Lucero, my poor Lucero!" he murmured softly kissing her on the brow; but then he stole away again. He knew the value of this profound stupor, which he had enjoyed as a state of perfect bliss!

It was not till the next day that Fernando made the discovery which had given Lucero the most terrible of surprises. Early in the morning, with the weather even more pleasant than the day before, the former Royal Butler was standing on the poop looking out over the sea and talking to don Cristobal, quite recovered, meantime, from any annoyances the rolling of the vessel may at first have caused him. Cuevas recognized him from afar, by the showy elegance of his costume and the condescending manner he adopted toward the captain-general, as though he already thought himself an expert mariner.

For a time the young man stood riveted to the deck in his fright and astonishment at seeing his dreaded foe again so near at hand. But this state of mind gradually yielded to a sense of assurance and determined tranquility—that feeling of self-reliance which the great Ocean seems to inspire in the men who live in close contact with it, far removed from the cowardly compromises of life on land. There they would be safe from the Inquisition and the Holy Brotherhood! What could Gonzalez do to them after all? Even if he denounced them to the commander of the fleet, don Cristobal could do nothing but take them along with him. An elopement between a boy and a girl would seem a very insignificant thing out there in mid-ocean on a voyage headed for the marvellous realms of the Grand Khan! Don Cristobal might even take their side—he had always been so kind toward them, no matter how beset by the perplexities of the expedition. They might also count on Pinzon the Elder and other important officers of the fleet who had not been well impressed by the boastful Butler.

Since, in that tiny world but a few square rods over all, people were all to a certain extent together, Cuevas

had confirmation of this last notion in the course of that very day. In order to enjoy a walk at all extended, the inhabitants of the after-castle had to come down to the deck amidships and brush elbows with the common sailors grouped about the mainmast or near the castle forward. Fernando was thus able to hear a whispered conversation between Diego de Arana and one of the Royal Commissioners, a certain Escobar, who was also scrivener of the fleet. They had apparently come forward in order to talk together with greater freedom. They did not mention Gonzalez's name, but it was clear that they were discussing him and not at all favorably. They were both offended at his haughty manner toward everybody aft, and Arana especially because of the Butler's pose as virtual outfitter of the expedition. In reality he had brought only a small portion of the money he had promised and at the very last moment.

"I am sure there is usury of some kind or other in connection with it. The captain-general took an eighth share in the voyage night before last, and I know he had no money himself. He must have paid for it with what this man brought. It would be interesting to know what papers don Cristobal had to sign before he got it! The Royal Butler is not wasting his time on this expedition. He is here to look after the profits he expects to realize."

"Even with that eighth interest," said the scrivener, who shared the other's dislike for Gonzalez, "we would not have been able to sail, had not señor Martin Alonso come forward with a sum equal to half of the advance from the Sovereigns."

The two continued talking, but Cuevas felt obliged to move away before the scowl which the High Constable of the fleet turned in his direction in anger that a mere broom boy should be keeping so close to officers from aft.

All that day and for several following Cuevas lingered about the deck in view of the after-castle, hoping to catch sight of Lucero and in the greatest concern that she should be living in that tiny area in such close proximity to the man who had tried to do them harm ashore. To find distraction from such periods of anxious watching, as well as to learn as much as possible of this new kind of life he would listen to the chat of the men in his mess—the winds were continuing favorable and the sea calm; hardly a shift of sail was necessary, and the different watches would sit about the deck amidships for hours at a time, never disturbed by the mate's call, nor by the whistle of Chachu, the second mate.

An old sailor from the Bay of Biscay had many stories to tell of whale fishing in his home waters. An Andalucian, who had been to Guinea with the famous corsair, Pedro Cabron, described the cannibals he had met there —particularly the pantry of an African chief where human arms and legs were hung up to dry like hams and bacons. An apprentice who had lived with the Moors at Ceuta thought that, at the end of the voyage, they would see some of the wonders described by the Arab geographers—trees that barked like dogs, and other trees that blossomed with beautiful flowers and finally bore pretty girls as fruit, all virgins, and much prized in the markets where slaves were bought for the harems!

The Englishman and the Irishman sponsored by Pinzon the Elder both belonged to Fernando's mess. They would listen to all these tales in silence. Lages, the Englishman, spoke Spanish with difficulty and did not understand half of what he heard, though he approved of everything with generous nods of his head. The silence of the Irishman, Garvey, seemed to cover a thoughtful disposition. Garvey understood the language and spoke

it well. It was just his nature not to talk. From the very first, Cuevas noted in him a rare ability to understand many things that were never said.

Garvey was a lean, dark-skinned man of moderate stature, his intensely black hair streaked here and there with the first lines of gray. There was something about his soft black eyes that seemed to reach the innermost soul of the person they fell upon. He was a melancholy spirit, fond of solitude. Quite without knowing why, Cuevas felt that Garvey was the most interesting man in the mess which he served. Garvey had also noted the "broom" Andujar, and the boy was almost the only one with whom he talked. Plied with Fernando's questions, Garvey could be induced to converse at length about the beautiful island whence he came. He had an idea that the Irish were of the same race as the people along the northeast coast of Spain. Cuevas concluded that there must have been some mysterious drama in the Irishman's youth to give him such an air of sad repentance.

"I have been a great sinner," Garvey ventured one evening, as they were talking together. "If I desire to go on living it is to do some good in the world and obtain God's forgiveness."

Then, shortly, he added:

"Your brother reminds me of a daughter I once had. It may seem strange to say that of a boy, but so it is. That's why I like both of you!"

Fernando could not suppress a start of surprise, and looked at the Irishman inquiringly. Had Garvey divined their secret? But the man continued, his voice trembling with a sob:

"I lost my daughter . . . her mother died too! . . . However, let's talk no more of that . . . I said I was a

great sinner. I have been that. . . . Now I'm alone in the world."

From the first day out, the Irishman had had something on his mind which caused him often to absent himself from the story-telling of his watch. Two apprentices and one old sailor had each a guitar, and rarely would an hour pass without at least a bit of thrumming from the interior of the castle forward. Don Cristobal would stand on the taffrail of the quarter deck and listen delightedly to this music which took him back to the streets of Cordoba during the days of his last love-making—one of the happiest periods of his melancholy past. As the guitars played, one or two apprentices would join in singing, their heads thrown back, their mouths wide open, vibrating forth through the clear salt air the long trembling wails of Moorish love songs naturalized by the populace of Andalucia.

"William of Galway" would walk up and down past the musicians with a worried look, pleased at what he heard, but desirous at the same time of making an improvement in it by a contribution of his own. Finally he went to the ship's carpenter, and for the few farthings still left from his advance he persuaded that skilled artisan to cut out a sort of triangular board, following directions closely. From the older of the guitarists he procured a few spare strings—and then he disappeared.

On the afternoon of the fourth day out, Fernando stumbled upon him on top of the after-castle, where he was sitting behind two coils of hawser, busily at work on a harp. Wholly absorbed in what he was doing, his head bent low over his board, the Irishman paid no attention to the people who came and stood behind him, silently observing the deft movements of his hands.

When finally, during a brief exchange after another of his night watches at the binnacle, Cuevas succeeded in having a word with Lucero, they both agreed that Gonzalez had said nothing either to don Cristobal or to his man, Terreros, touching the true identity of the disguised page, Salcedo. Evidently the Butler was biding his time, awaiting a more propitious moment for the revelation! Or perhaps, Fernando thought, he too was thinking of the realms of the Grand Khan, a world to which all on board looked forward as a fairyland in which all desires came true!

Meantime the fleet was bowling merrily southward before favoring winds, and on the sixth day the Canaries appeared on the horizon. The "Pinta" had broken the fastenings of her rudder and to make the repair she had to be beached. Martin Alonso took advantage of this opportunity to change her rig, replacing the triangular or lateen sails with the square sails used on the other boats. Many days were necessary for all this work, and the crews were again on a half-vacation. The "broom" Andujar, had more frequent opportunity to meet his "brother" at the ladder which ran up to the poop; and on one occasion he caught a glimpse of the captain-general's rooms.

On don Cristobal's bed, a tapestry coverlet in vivid colors, the designs representing a flowering garden of springtime with fantastic animals climbing about the trees! Lucero noted in her master a love of finery quite like a woman's, especially in his tastes for colored cloths, jewels and perfumes. Don Cristobal's table showed a whole row of *almaras* (phials) bought of the Moors in Seville and Granada, each tiny bottle provided with a long stopper that could be used to sprinkle its contents about. Orange, rose, lemon-flower! The captain-general

literally drenched with such things his clothes, his books, and the paper on which he did his writing.

On the same table lay a large folio volume bound in sheep-skin, wherein, Lucero whispered, don Cristobal set down each day the record of the voyage. Scarcely had the three ships crossed the bar at Saltes, when she saw him hurry to his table, open this book, then blank, and with a new goosequill freshly cut, draw a cross at the top of the opening leaf and write underneath: *In nomine domini nostri Jesu Christi.* Not once had he failed in keeping this log!

"He always says his prayers," Lucero added. "He has a *paternoster* and every night he tells his rosary before going to bed, and he reads also afternoons, just like a priest. I believe he talks sometimes with the Christ on the crucifix at the head of his bed. At least he stands in front of it and says things, when he is quite alone. Probably he keeps asking for wisdom to guide us safely home."

On several occasions, already, Fernando had encountered the ex-Royal Butler face to face, but the man pretended each time never to have seen him before. This, however, did not reassure young Cuevas, for later on he found Gonzalez studying him slyly out of the corner of an eye; and Lucero reported that he was following a similar tactic with her. That he was revolving some plan in his head became apparent while the "Santa Maria" one day was taking on fuel and water, and the crew was in touch with shore. Gonzalez landed twice, and each time he found pretexts to request don Cristobal that Lucero be sent ashore with him. The first time the captain-general had suggested that some broom or apprentice from the forecastle would serve the Butler's purposes better. The second time Lucero had reminded her

master of important things to be done in his room and feigned also a sudden illness.

Lucero sensed a real danger also in the man Terreros. From the days at La Rábida the Master-at-table had had a real spite against her, because of her close association with his "lord the Admiral." Here on board he was always flattering to the once Royal Butler:

"After my lord, the Admiral," said he, "the man in the world whom I most admire is my lord, don Pedro."

Now it was hard for the two lovers to guess just to what extent Terreros may have been influenced by Gonzalez; but certainly he was becoming more and more brutal every day in his treatment of don Cristobal's page. At that time it was not unusual for orders aboard ship to be emphasized with a cuff delivered by the officer to the subordinate who received the command. It was generally believed that terror was the only sound basis for discipline. On the day when the fleet was setting sail from the Canaries, Terreros gave Lucero a beating, alleging that there had been some defect in what she had done. When Cuevas heard about the episode that night he made for the first time what was truly a man's vow:

"I will kill that fellow," he said, as he felt stirring within him the determination of a race implacable in its vendettas. "I will kill him the first time I catch him ashore!"

But the thing that surprised him was that as he uttered the vow the image before his mind was not the name he had on his lips. In his mind he was thinking of the former Royal Butler, Pero Gonzalez.

On a Sunday, the ninth day of September, the crews of the flotilla lost the last peaks of the Canaries from view. A hundred men were striking out into the great deep guided by a score of other men who alone might

have some notion of where they were going and of the approximate spots of the earth's surface where they might be each day.

Yet conditions could not have been more encouraging. The seas continued smooth, the winds favorable. The vessels were going ahead at a rate of ten miles an hour, an extraordinary speed for craft of those days. Weather and water seemed to be conspiring to bring success to the voyage.

Five days out from the Canaries a ripple of uneasiness swept over the fleet. The compasses suddenly began to show a course northeast, while the course from the sun was due west. Don Cristobal found an explanation, offhand, to satisfy the crews;—they had left the North Star somewhat behind them! As a matter of fact this was their first encounter with the variation of the compass.

The captain-general himself was, later on, unable to make his observations tally with the dead reckoning of his mate, Juan de la Cosa. He was inclined to blame the helmsman. It was only weeks later that he understood that a current had been sweeping him south of his course.

These disputes over courses were the beginning of ill-feeling between don Cristobal and the crew of the "Santa Maria." The men on the "Pinta" and the "Niña" were mostly from Palos and Moguer, and they trusted their captains as friends and tried seamen. The men on the sometime "Marigalante" were a motley group, picked up at random at various ports of the Atlantic seaboard of Europe. They had not known their captain before this voyage.

Otherwise things could not have been more perfect. Day after day the men looked out over a placid sea

sparkling under a brilliant sun, the horizon line unbroken save for an occasional fleecy cloud that harbored no storm but drifted peacefully up to cast a blue shadow over the green waters. Once in a while a bird would be seen, and at night there were showers of flower-shaped meteors. The nights, furthermore, seemed to grow more and more peaceful as the voyage advanced, the air softer and balmier, and with a strange tropical fragrance. On the deck of the "Santa Maria," the Andalucian guitars were thrummed incessantly, and when they fell silent it was only to give greater relief to a lighter, more fragile music, as it were the distant song of a siren swimming somewhere off the bow—the Irishman and his harp!

Garvey never added his voice to the plaintive melodies that came from his instrument. He improvised, sitting on the forecastle and striking chords or playing scales without connection, his eyes fixed on a star, always the same star, a star he may have seen in the days of his lost youth, back there in his country, the evergreen isle.

As Fernando, one night, on finishing his watch in the binnacle, sat listening to this dreamy music of the hidden harp and breathing the perfume of the tropical air he felt an uncontrollable desire to see Lucero, take her for a moment in his arms, taste one of her kisses on his lips. It would be dangerous for him to violate the boundaries of the forecastle at such an hour—yet, who would be likely to see him? Lucero was still sleeping on her mattress outside don Cristobal's door!

Fernando allowed his companion on watch to walk off as usual, while he lagged behind in the vicinity of the after-castle, waiting for his opportunity to slip into the little room that served as ante-chamber to don Cristobal's quarters. Then climbing the ladder to the poop he tiptoed through the living room, guided by Lucero's

breathing, as on that first night when he had found her cold and half-dead from seasickness.

Now she shivered as in fright at the warm contact of his arms and shoulders; but he smothered with a kiss the cry she would have uttered at the sudden awakening.

"It is I, Lucero!" he whispered, kissing her again. "Don't be afraid! Hush!"

And they sat thus, for some time. Recovering from her alarm, the girl returned his kisses, as the only way of satisfying him, and persuading him to be off as soon as possible—she was terrified lest they be discovered! The High Constable of the Fleet shared the cabin adjoining with the Crown Commisioner and the Royal Notary. Pero Gonzalez, as a friend of the "Admiral," had a smaller room alone, nearby.

"One more, and I will go!" Fernando murmured, close to Lucero's ear.

But it was that one, and another, and another, as though the kisses would never end.

The ship was rolling gently on the ground swell, and as it heeled over to one side and then back, the brilliancy of the starlit night cut an arc of dimmer light inside the door of the living room of the after-castle, illuminating the nook in the captain-general's ante-room in which the two lovers sat concealed.

Suddenly Fernando felt a hard clutch at the hair of his head, which lifted him up till he was standing on his feet. Then the same clutch was released while a heavy blow struck his cheek, followed by a succession of swifter ones which caught him full in the breast.

In the half-light he recognized the person of Pero Gonzalez—not the august gentleman in laces and silks but a man who had just leapt from bed, awakened by some unusual sound.

Never halting his fists, Gonzalez pushed him across the living room and out on the deck till the unlucky "broom" stood back to the ladder descending to the main deck from the poop where another blow hurled him sprawling to the hard planking below.

This had all been so sudden that by the time the bewildered "Andujar" had recovered his wits to the extent of trying to defend himself, he was lying helpless on the deck amidships.

He rose slowly to his feet, and stood silent for a moment as though hardly able to understand that such a thing had happened. Then gradually it came to him: he had been beaten—and by the man he most despised! Beaten! And by Gonzalez!

He threw a hand instinctively to his belt; but he found nothing but ends of ganging, which the "broom" was required to keep in readiness for a sailor's call. Seamen carried knives, but not "brooms"!

He ran to a roped off section of the deck where the calking outfit was sheltered under canvas, along with harpoon for chance fishing. He seized one of the three pronged spears and darted back toward the ladder leading up to the poop.

But a firm hand laid hold on his arm and stopped him in his tracks, and then it moved up and was laid gently on his shoulder.

It was the Irishman, his harp hanging from his free hand.

Garvey was gazing at Fernando out of watery eyes, as though he been weeping; then he spoke with the deliberation of one accustomed to long silences:

"No, young man, don't lose your head! On shipboard such things are serious!"

And he looked aloft, with a gesture toward one of the yardarms.

The Irishman must have seen everything, despite the darkness of the night, and the distance to where he was sitting on the bow. At any rate, what he had not seen he had guessed:

"Leave such matters till we get over there!" he added in a tone of warning—"till we get over there, in the land of the Grand Khan!"

CHAPTER VIII

"LAND! LAND!"

Within a few days after sailing from the Canaries the Fleet of Discovery entered a world of geographical deception and illusion. The still placid waters began to show great fields of green sea weed, and the explorers judged it must have been detached from shore a short time before. The birds that kept appearing over the vessels were all land nesters and must have come from nearby rocks.

Don Cristobal was more convinced than anyone else of the nearness of uncharted land.

"There are islands to either hand of us," Lucero heard him say one morning. "The mainland I locate farther ahead. These nearer isles don't amount to much. With God's help we shall sight them on our return voyage."

The fleet was at that moment some twelve hundred miles west of the Canaries, and was indeed not far from a number of shoals, which were not actually to be seen by Europeans till three hundred years later—a British warship finally charted them in the year 1802. Probably mariners before Columbus's time had stumbled on these same signs and suffered similar disillusionments. He, at any rate, was certain that he was sailing among the outermost islets of China and Japan.

"Observe," he continued, "that we are only fourteen

days out. I always said it would take twenty-four days to come across from Spain to Asia by the Western route. That gives us still ten days more."

In the castle aft, the captain-general found sympathetic listeners. Gonzalez, Arana, and the Royal Commissioners had been convinced by don Cristobal's arguments and had no doubt at all that the invisible islands were there. Juan de la Cosa said nothing, but gazed thoughtfully at sea and sky hoping to see something definite to confirm such assertions.

And gradually the signs of land grew fewer. Again the great Ocean lay before them in its vast monotonous immensity. Every day, at sunset, the fast sailing "Pinta" would come in from its "stabs" to starboard or larboard and drop, with the "Niña," under the stern of the flagship, and a conference would take place between the three commanders as to the course for the following day. One evening don Cristobal brought out a chart which he had kept up to that moment in the greatest secrecy, and it was passed on a line from vessel to vessel. All agreed that the fleet was now located at a point where a large island appeared on the chart—either Antilia or the Isle of the Seven Cities. But land was nowhere to be seen!

Nevertheless expectation was keen in all hands. In the misty hours of early evening, the clouds that piled up on the horizon taking capricious shapes and colors, often looked like land. At one moment the "Pinta" and the "Niña," which were leading, fired their bombards and raised their flags, while their crews began to cry "Land! Land!" Lucero saw the captain-general fall to his knees on the deck of the flagship's after-castle and begin to offer a prayer of thanksgiving while the others and the crew amidships entoned a *Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

And the "Pinta" put on all sail ahead to reconnoitre the land discovered. But shortly the cloud disappeared and the sea returned unbroken. It was just an illusion, like many that had beset the voyage.

The disappointments that followed on such false hopes had their worst effects on the motley crew of the "Santa Maria." As Cuevas served the daily food and watered wine to the men in his mess he was now hearing constant discussion of the competence of this "foreign" captain. To be sure, the weather was perfect, and everything was going well with the voyage. But the very monotony of unvaried sunshine was beginning to pall. Days were unutterably long. After many disillusionments, there was no longer any interest in the birds, or the schools of fish, or the masses of flotsam, that were again beginning to appear. The more aggressive sailors in the crew were saying openly that "the Genoese aft" was an imposter who had probably never been to sea before.

Cuevas meantime was gradually learning more about the youth of his friend, Garvey. The Irishman must have been a captain or at least a navigator on some of his boats. As he participated in these arguments about the merits of don Cristobal he showed a knowledge which could very well have earned him a position aft. He used the technical phrases navigators used and was certain he could "cast the point" on a marine chart as well as don Cristobal or Juan de la Cosa—"casting the point" was to determine the position of a ship at a given hour. That a man like the Irishman should be found before the mast was not surprising. Navigation was not taught in schools, but in the hard practice of life at sea. Every captain had at some time been an apprentice. The hazards of life moved people up and down in the shipboard

hierarchy. Juan de la Cosa did not think he was losing anything by passing from captain to mate. Another man in the crew of the "Santa Maria" had often commanded ships out of Palos—a certain Roldan, and more than once on the voyage don Cristobal called him aft to consult with him, even exposing to his inspection the mysterious chart which was the sole guide of the expedition.

Garvey's situation must have been similar, but the fact, for one thing, that he was a foreigner, and a desire on his part that was more and more apparent to Cuevas to "live down" something in his previous life, made him careful to conceal his real knowledge and experience. It was his mess-mates rather who drew him out, asserting that they trusted him more than they trusted "the man aft."

"Here we are," Garvey said one day at mess, "here we are at the beginning of October. We have made twenty-eight hundred and twenty-eight miles. This is farther west than the captain-general said we would find Cipango. But where is Cipango—do you see it anywhere?"

And his companions would nod their heads with expressions of incredulity and gaze mistrustfully toward the quarter-deck.

Six more uneventful days went by, Fernando catching sight of Lucero only at rare intervals and from a distance, as she chanced sometimes to step to the taffrail of the castle aft. On one or two nights, after completing his watch "at the bottle" he had ventured to steal across the living room of the command and approach Lucero's bed as he had done before. He had always found her awake, and waiting; but only to beg him to go away lest they again be surprised by the

odious Butler, whose influence and whose presence Lucero could feel about her like the circlings of a hawk about some future prey.

To tell the truth, the former Provisioner of Their Highnesses had been paying less attention to the girl for a week or more past. The failure of Cipango to rise from the sea at the time and place predicted by the captain-general had suddenly given Gonzalez cause for concern as to the fate of the money he had invested in the expedition. Had he guessed badly? Gonzalez was that sort of man: as between money and carnal pleasure, money was a most important thing! He had little thought for women when his purse was in danger!

Sometimes in the late afternoon or in the early morning hours, Cuevas would venture to approach the ladder that led up from the deck to the after-castle, in the hope of exchanging a word with Lucero. But Garvey noticed these infractions of the rules, and finally chided him with a kindly severity, collaring him and leading him forward:

"On this side of the chain, boy!" he would say. "On this side of the chain! Here we are in our own country. If the man troubles you here, you can do anything you like to him. But if he strikes you over there and you strike back, it's the yard arm for you. He is not an officer. He is not even in the ship's company. But he is a friend of the captain-general and his quarters are aft. You owe him the same respect and obedience you give to señor Juan de la Cosa."

And Cuevas could do nothing but heed these words of counsel, gazing sadly aft in the hope of seeing Lucero, feeling that the girl he loved was quite alone and without protection whether against the persecution of the former Royal Butler or against the beatings of the cap-

tain-general's Master-at-table. Nor could he even confide the whole truth to this kindly and trustworthy Irishman, who was taking such a sincere interest in him!

A disagreement among the captains was becoming obvious to the crews of the three vessels as they listened to the sunset conferences under the stern of the "Santa Maria." Don Cristobal insisted on continuing west, following the parallel of the Canaries which he thought led straight to the mainland of the Grand Khan. Pinzon the Elder thought the course should be southwest following the flights of the sea-birds. This would bring them first to Cipango, where they could rest and then go on to further explorations of the continent of Asia.

At the conference of the ninth of October the captain-general finally acceded. The people aft, on the "Santa Maria," accepted the change optimistically:

"First Cipango, for a little rest in the palaces with tiles of gold! Then we go on to visit the Grand Khan!"

But forward of the chain amidships, voices of consternation greeted this advance into the unknown sea with a plan that kept changing from day to day! So, "the Genoese" did not know where he was going! And if anything went wrong—not his fault, but the fault of some poor sailor!

Some of the louder talkers in the forecastle began thinking of killing the captain, throwing his body overboard and then going back to look for the islands they had left behind. But such proposals were immediately hushed. The "Santa Maria" was not alone. Off there stood the "Niña" and the "Pinta"! There would be the Pinzons to deal with! At the first signs of trouble on the flagship, those doughty brothers could be relied on to board her and exact retribution for infringements of discipline. When Cuevas anxiously questioned Garvey as

to the meaning of this discontent, the Irishman answered bluntly:

"Smoke from the galley!"

And in fact most of the grumbling took place about the fire amidships among the appetizing smells that came from the boiling pots.

What next took place, Cuevas attributed, if not to the impulsiveness and momentary bewilderment of the commander, then to the nervousness and rage of the former Royal Butler, whom he had seen in vehement conversation with the chief on the quarterdeck at various times during the day of October tenth. Late that afternoon a bombard was fired from the stern of the "Santa Maria." The "Pinta" which was far ahead as usual, came into the wind and waited for the flagship to overhaul her. The "Niña" which stood abeam bore down under don Cristobal's after-castle.

When the three ships were within speaking distance, the captain-general called from his quarterdeck:

"Captains, my people are making trouble! What do you think we ought to do?"

Vicente Yañez Pinzon answered with the characteristic exaggeration of the Andalucian sailor:

"What ought we do? We are going on to the two thousand league mark—then it will be time to talk of turning back!"

Martin Alonso seemed bored at the situation, and called back angrily:

"What's all this? Here we are hardly clear of Palos, and you are quitting? All sail, and forward, in God's name, commander! The Lord will bless us with the victory of Land; for surely He would never allow us to go back as disgracefully as this!"

Then heightening his voice so that all the forecastle

of the "Santa Maria" would be sure to hear, he added, in the manner of the ex-corsair of the Portuguese wars:

"I can see, captain, you have five or six growlers on your hands. Well, feed them to the mackerel, and if you don't want to do it yourself, my brother and I will board you, and do it for you!"

"God bless you, gentlemen!" don Cristobal called to the two captains. "We will keep on as we are, for another week. If, at the end of eight days, we have not made land, we will issue other orders as to what should be done about such a great voyage!"

But Martin Alonso would not be put off:

"Remember, sir, that that night at Pero Vasquez's, I swore by the Royal Crown, that neither I nor kin of mine would return till we had discovered land—so long as our people should be in health and there was food for us all. Well, then, where are we short? Not a man is sick aboard, and your ship and our caravels have plenty of food and water. Why falter now? If anyone wants to go back, he may do so! For my part, I am going on, and I will find land or die in this attempt!"

After this exchange, good order and respectful obedience to the commander were established on the flagship. Again the "Pinta" went out in front, the "Santa Maria" lagging far behind with the "Niña" standing by as though to be sure that all was well.

Accustomed by his youthful tastes to danger and inclined to side with any revolt against authority, Fernando Cuevas had been observing the sullen rise of mutiny aboard with a conflict of feelings within him. He was a devoted admirer of his benefactor, don Cristobal. He sensed in the man something unusual that lifted him far above other men. At the same time, by one of those quirks of a boy's logic, he was thrilled to hear

strong and courageous sailors talk of rising and slaughtering everyone who stood in their way. He looked forward to rebellion aboard as to something well worth waiting for. That would give him a chance to run up astern there, take one of those harpoons they kept for the big fish, and spike two men to the deck planking—the one a former Butler to Their Highnesses, the other the "Master-at-table" of "my lord, the Admiral." These were the only two persons aboard whom he had learned to hate.

However, the mutiny did not materialize. The men again were gathering amidships to look out over the Ocean with renewed curiosity, as though there were something beautiful anl quieting about it.

A frigate-bird came sailing by, steering itself along with its forked rudder-like tail, in pursuit doubtless of some sea-gull, on the droppings of which it lives.

The sea was in flat calm; and the crew, now again in the best of spirits, went overboard, swimming about with great glee, as they had often done at earlier periods in the long voyage.

Horse-mackerel were now plentiful about the vessels, "their flesh as sweet as salmon, only not red but white."

Numerous dark gray gulls—young ones, fresh from the rocks—were in sight.

In his conversations at mess on the eleventh, Garvey showed a sanguine optimism far different from his depression of the days before:

"There is no doubt that we are approaching land," said he. "The captain did well in following Pinzon's advice and turning a little south. We keep seeing birds of colored plumage, and they are all going in one direction. The Portuguese discovered the islands off the Green Cape by following the birds."

Land in fact was near.

All signs of sea and air indicated the proximity of islands.

The "Pinta," continually outsailing her sister ships, began making new "stabs" out into the sea to port or starboard of the established course, opening the angle of exploration in order to be the first to sight land.

A wooden stake!

A floating reed!

A smaller piece of wood, hewn apparently with an iron instrument!

A broken reed!

A slab of wood!

Fragments of sod, beyond question from land!

So the signals poured in from the "Pinta."

The "Niña" reported a pole covered with barnacles.

Parrots, of one species or another, were remarked by all three vessels, always flying in the same direction—toward land where they could rest!

At sundown that afternoon the sailors of the flagship sang the *Salve* as usual; but the captain-general made an address from the taffrail of the after-castle—a flood of that figured and good-humored eloquence native to him when his irritability and mistrust of others were appeased by fair prospects.

"My good men," he said, "we must be devoutly grateful to the Almighty who has vouchsafed us such a voyage, blessing us with seas so calm, winds so gentle and so favorable, without those storms and discomforts which are the wonted lot of those who go down to the sea in ships. And since I trust that through Grace from On High we shall be sighting land before many hours have passed, I earnestly beseech you, one and all, to be specially attentive to your duties this night, keeping sharp

watch from the castle forward at all times, understanding that land is before us and that we must be more careful than at any time in the past."

Enthusiasm once more prevailed on the flagship. The feeling that at last the drive westward would come to an end dispelled all the animosities of the days preceding A fresh breeze was blowing over a moonlit sea, though the moon disappeared from time to time behind great fleecy clouds.

After sundown, Garvey and Cuevas crossed the chain amidships and took places at the rail under the after-castle. It was as though everyone, in this exciting situation, had a right to know what the commander of the fleet was thinking and saying. At ten o'clock they caught sight of him on the quarterdeck. He was walking vigorously to and fro.

Suddenly he stopped, gazed fixedly at the horizon, and then called to another person who was sitting on a coil of rope on the topmost point of the poop.

"Gonzalez, come here, quick! I see a sort of light, something like a candle flickering, up and down. It's so hazy and so far away I could hardly say it's land."

The Royal Butler stepped to the captain's side and at once affirmed that he could see clearly what don Cristobal had seen but hazily.

Sanchez de Segovia, one of the Royal Commissioners came out on deck. He was not so ready to see the light. In fact he said he could not see it at all.

Gonzalez then called Terreros, the Master-at-table. Terreros had no difficulty in finding the light, once he had made sure it was the captain-general who was seeing it.

"I take it to be a torch in the hands of some native, perhaps a woman who has left her cabin to perform some

natural necessity in the open air. That's why the light goes up and down."

Garvey, the Irishman, leapt up on the rail, supporting himself on the cordage. He could see no light at first. But after a time he made out a red dot on the horizon, moving up and down over the black water, and perhaps twelve or fifteen miles away.

"It's a mistake!" he commented softly to Cuevas. "That light is on the 'Pinta,' maybe ten, maybe twenty miles ahead of us. If the light came from the land, the men on the 'Pinta' would have seen it long before this and fired the warning gun. There's a big reward at stake for them!"

It was a warm tropical night, inviting to sleep in the open air. Few of the sailors had gone to their bunks between decks in the forecastle. As though in celebration in advance of a discovery which everyone felt to be imminent the Andalucian guitars were thrumming at the bow. A short distance farther aft, Cuevas was sitting with Garvey, his head on a coil of rope, listening to the melancholy tinkle of the Irishman's harp. Before he knew it, he had been lulled to sleep on the hard deck.

At two in the morning everyone aboard the "Santa Maria" was suddenly awakened. In the far distance a cannon shot had been heard. It was the "Pinta," and gradually, over the dark sea, came the sound of cheering. The swift caravel had come about and was lying to waiting for the slower vessels to come abreast of her. Roberto de Triana, a sailor born in one of the populous quarters of Seville, had been on watch forward on the "Pinta." Just after midnight the skies had cleared of clouds and everything was bright. Suddenly the man Triana thought he saw a line of surf on a strip of white

beach; then raising his eyes he distinguished unmistakably the dark outlines of a shore. He had rushed to a bombard and fired a shot, raising the cry "Land!"

When the ships were within speaking distance, don Cristobal called:

"Martin Alonso, you have made land!"

"Yes, the prize is ours!" replied Pinzon.

"I send you a Christmas box of five thousand *maravedis*," said don Cristobal. "I discovered land myself at ten o'clock!"

Blank silence fell over the crews of the fleet at these words. Cuevas had taken advantage of the exciting moment to join Lucero at the foot of the ladder leading to the poop. They believed they had reached the lands of the Grand Khan, and would soon be free from the life of deception and danger which had been theirs for some months.

They were distracted for a moment by the sound of an angry voice raised in the heat of argument. It was Garvey, speaking to a group of sailors:

"That's ridiculous!" he was saying. "At ten o'clock we were almost fifty miles from land, for we have been making twelve miles an hour for four hours. The shore, as reported from the 'Pinta,' is low. How could a light be seen at that distance? Besides, there's the curvature of the Earth!" . . .

From the poop, meantime, came the voice of Terreros, protesting the effrontery of a plain sailor on the "Pinta" in claiming a reward which could only belong to "my lord, the Admiral." Admiral don Cristobal was, at that moment, not only Admiral of the Ocean Sea, but Viceroy of all New Found Land—himself and his descendants from generation to generation forever! Yet a contradictory person, a mixture of poet and trader, of visionary

mystic and bargain-driving man of affairs, he was choosing to compete with a poor sailor for the income of ten thousand farthings! The Irishman, whose pensive taciturnity covered an impetuously generous heart could not restrain his cry of outrage. But he soon fell silent. A man had stepped up to him, placed a hand on his shoulder, and surveyed him with a stern authoritative frown. The ex-Royal Butler had also risen in the world, so he thought! His investments were good after all—he was to be a fabulously wealthy man in the lands of the Grand Khan that lay hidden in a blanket of darkness before the prows of the three vessels. Those men in the crew had tortured him with worry during recent days of rumbling mutiny! It was now time to have done with comment and criticism from the forecastle!

Besides, he had a special dislike for Garvey. Gonzalez had seen the Irishman constantly loitering about decks in company with Cuevas—the man probably had been informed of everything touching the Jewess of Andujar. The Butler had good reasons for thinking so. At various times he had thought of approaching Lucero on the after-deck; but on each and every occasion he had found the Irishman on the deck below, looking up at him from amidships, now with his arms crossed, now with his harp raised as it were in menace, but at any rate, always on watch! Why was he meddling in affairs that did not concern him—that man, an Irish vagabond, who had been refused as a disreputable person by the authorized recruiter of the fleet, and had been accepted only through a whim of Pinzon the Elder? And now he was venturing to question a statement of the Admiral Major of the Ocean Sea!

Gonzalez had an instinctive hatred for the poor, as also an instinctive respect for the successful and the

powerful. At this moment he felt in himself an extraordinary courage. To be sure he was "dressing light" as was natural on shipboard—his sword was in his cabin. But he had a dagger hanging from his belt; and on deciding to descend to the main deck to reprove this noisy sailor he had further armed himself with a marlinspike.

"How dare you," he began, his voice shaking with rage, "how dare you dispute something said by our Admiral? I know how to deal with troublesome beggars like you . . ."

And raising the marlinspike he levelled two tremendous blows at the Irishman's head. Garvey was able to avoid the first and to parry the second, so that his face was merely cut as the end of the cudgel whizzed past. The once Royal Butler was about to strike a third blow. Garvey, however, knew the rules. With a few leaps he was forward of the chain before the mast. His aggressor, emboldened by this apparent flight, made after him, and only halted as other members of the crew, alarmed at this breach of sanctuary, gathered about him in protest. The two men were left facing each other across the chain, their eyes flaming with mortal anger. Finally Garvey spoke, lowering his voice intentionally so that only his enemy could hear, but addressing him in the familiar form the Butler had used toward him:

"Don't set your foot across this chain, pastry maker to the devil! On this side we would be equals and I would skin you alive unless you ran away, like the coward you are!"

The beating of a sailor was nothing extraordinary on shipboard in those days; and in the midst of the interest excited by the unknown land that lay hidden before the fleet, Garvey's misfortune passed all but unobserved.

A half-hour later everyone had forgotten it, except Cuevas and Lucero. Vainly Fernando sought the Irishman throughout the boat. He had gone into hiding, as though his humiliation at having been beaten unavenged made the presence of other human beings intolerable to him.

Off the new found shore, the three vessels were lying to, with bonnets in and all sails furled save the lowers. These were "so set as neither to go forward nor fall off, but to hold as they stood till dawn should come."

These last hours of darkness, just before the first blushes of sunrise, were hours of anxious dreaming and fantastic hopes for those handfuls of men crowded under the awnings of their floating houses. What would they see when the darkness cleared away?

Even the roughest of those rough souls must have felt inspired at such a time. They had spent the long days of the voyage rehearsing the magnificences of the Grand Khan of Tartary, which men of learning talked of in their books. The first rays of the oncoming sun would probably burst upon those palaces with golden tiles of which Martin Alonso had spoken in the Square at Palos to incite men to ship with the fleet. Gardens flowering with cinnamon trees, pepper plants, and the growing things that bore other rare spices! A harbor lined with marble docks, resplendent as the court of honor of a castle in Spain, with lines of elephants marching majestically along, gaudy with trappings of red silk, and each with a tower on its back, a tower of chiseled gold, trembling in the light like the thrones in the cathedrals at home! On the water, boats with colored sails and figureheads of mythological monsters, the high sterns built like the tails of birds unheard-of, the anchors and metal work of silver and gold! Enthusiastic sailors asserted they could scent

the fragrance of precious spice wafted past their nostrils on the salt air of the Southern night!

The dawn came, with that rapidity, that theatrical majesty, which characterizes the risings and the settings of the sun in tropical climes; and all could now see a low sandy island, sparsely sprinkled with tufts of green too thin to be called a forest, the tranquil shaft of an inner lagoon gleaming through the trees.

In the seas of the Old World such an island would have seemed poor and scrawny to sailors of the luxuriant South. But this was the first land they had met after so many false hopes, such long continued uncertainty. Besides, those trees were of spices, unknown, and the whole prospect exhaled the virgin freshness of high mountain peaks first attained by man, the smiling innocent of all that has just been born!

No gold roofed palaces, no marble wharfs, no elephants, no boats of painted lacquer! On the beach human beings could be seen, men completely naked, gathered in groups to look out upon the monsters which the Ocean had belched forth during the night. Bolder ones had climbed into hollowed tree trunks and with paddles moved by both hands were manœuvering about the vessels of the fleet at safe distances, curious to approach these floating palaces of gods hitherto unknown, but not daring as yet to risk the dread contact with them.

The captain-general was impatient to set foot on this land, though it was different from anything he had been expecting during the voyage. Meantime, one of his dreams had come true: he was at last Admiral Major of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy of New Found Lands! The advanced isles of Asia had come out to meet him, to confirm the titles bestowed on him by the Monarchs of Spain and clothe him in real Sovereignty!

Early in the morning on the twelfth of October, in the year of Our Lord one thousand four hundred and ninety two, Columbus donned the scarlet uniform of the Admirals of Castile and entered the long boat of his flagship with all of his staff which the craft could hold. Those who had armor—cuirasses, bracers, helmets, and shields—put it on, gathering up swords, lances and cross-bows. A few musketeers were taken along, with espinardes, or the shorter barreled arquebuses, on their shoulders. The two Pinzons, Martin Alonso and Vicente Yañez, also put off from the "Pinta" and the "Niña" in small boats, accompanied by the more presentable of their following. The Admiral's long boat carried the royal standard, the captain's, flags with a green cross and the letters "F" and "I," the royal initials, each letter under a crown.

All the men of the fleet had changed their appearances greatly during the voyage. It was not easy on board ship to follow the styles of facial ornament then in vogue on shore. One detail of these was a shave each day! There was only one barber between the three vessels, and he was attached to the service of the physician and the surgeon. He was unable to treat so many people; besides it was dangerous to wield a razor on ships of such shallow draught and such great sail, which were so sensitive to the movements of the sea. Sailors were accustomed to letting their beards grow during a voyage. The Admiral, in fact, had a white beard just broadening out, which gave him a certain venerable air as of a monk turned warrior. The others had faces more or less covered with hair, now curly and soft, now hard and bristly, till many honest hard-working sailors with wives and families looked like dangerous bandits.

The excitement of the landing was so great that little

attention was paid to the natives who stood looking curiously on from short distances.

Lucero was assigned to the long boat of the "Santa Maria," as personal servant on the Admiral. Cuevas slipped into the same boat, without permission, his presence remaining unobserved in the general confusion. It was he in reality who was the first of the white men to set foot on the soil of the new world, since he leapt overboard some distance out and ran ashore with Lucero in his arms to greet those naked people who stood about with painted faces and strange designs in red, yellow, and black, marked on their copper-colored skins.

Between discoverers and natives began the perplexing task of understanding each other by signs. For the Islanders, all those strange words spoken by the whites, their gestures, their long sentences, were incomprehensible rites of witchery fitting to divinities. They had lived hitherto cut off on their island, reaching out in their frail canoes to the isles nearby. Beyond that narrow circle, so far as they knew, stretched the infinite Ocean, the home of genii and celestial beings who raged in storm and rain or showered blessings in the sunlight that fed them and made the trees grow. Now at break of day these huge monsters had risen from the deep, floating forests of high trees with a strange foliage, white, and topped by colored blossoms that waved in the wind. Up over the line betwen sky and sea they had risen, first the tree trunks, then the white foliage; and they had halted near the shore; and from them great canoes had put off, larger and heavier than theirs, and manned by extraordinary beings, with bodies tatooed with marvelous colors and covered with a hard substance that glittered in the sun like the still waters of the lake at noon. And they all wore plumes on their heads, as colorful as

the parrots who came to nest in the tree tops of their islands; and they had cotton on their faces, some white, some brown, some black—so these natives in red skins and smooth faces, described the bearded cheeks of the newcomers. And they were pale, like the dead, and the native medicine men, who were wont to paint their features in that color, were more willing to approach the strangers, as though they felt they had something mysteriously in common with them. The chief of the pale faces, his face draped in white cotton, carried a long pole with a big parrot in gay plumage perched on the end—the royal standard. And two minor divinities stood beside him with green parrots on similar poles. The chief with the big parrot addressed unintelligible words to another paleface who stood nearby, holding a stick in his right hand and a sheet of white bark in the other and the second man drew magic figures as the chief spoke.

The natives were familiar with conjurations and magic rigmaroles, and took up the words they heard without understanding what they meant, repeating them over and over with the marvelous memory for sounds that primitive men possess.

Then the chief who had been speaking drew a shining stick from the left side of his body, and all saw in it the supreme talisman which harbored the divine powers these gods controlled.

The natives did their best to understand, trying to guess from the appearances of the Spaniards the things they were asking for. Looking at the flags and the plumed helmets, they thought parrots might be of use; and they brought offerings of these birds, the only animals the discoverers found on the island. They ran their fingers over the bearded faces of the white men, and at

once brought shocks of cotton, in the hope that these might please.

The Admiral, meantime, was looking around trying to discover some signs of the things with which he was most concerned. He noticed a bit of gold which one of the natives was wearing as a pendant in one of his nostrils.

The sight of this insignificant trinket filled the sailor with sudden gaiety. He recovered from the misgivings with which he had disembarked and began to ask, by signs, where they got the metal.

For these poor naked savages, lost on an island in the sea, gold had no value in itself. They viewed it as something which did not rust and which possessed therefore a magical power. They applied it to their own nostrils, and also placed it in the mouths and nostrils of the dead, in the belief that it might help to keep death and decay away. It was not surprising therefore that this god in the pale face covered with cotton should be interested in a metal of divine properties, and along with more parrots and more cotton they began to offer him all the plaques and pendants of gold they had in the perforations of their lips and ears and noses. And the god welcomed the gifts, filling their hands with glass beads, and bells, distributed now one at a time, now by the handful, and placing colored caps on the heads of those who seemed most pleased.

The natives were most astonished when one of their number, more venturesome than the rest, edged up to the pale-faced chief and laid a hand on the shining stick which the Great God had again returned to its hiding place at his side. The Great Magician in the white beard again took it out, flourished it about in the air and then invited the man to look at it and even to touch it. The

redskin hesitated a moment and then decided to lay the tip of his finger on this shaft of light which was as hard and rigid as one of his own cane spears. But then he passed the finger quickly down along its edges. There was a burning sensation, and his finger began to bleed! The magic sunbeam cut of its own accord, without the god's making any effort!

So the Discoverers passed the day, finding nothing on the island but naked savages, trees of unknown genus, parrots—the only animals—and a little lake that kept shining beyond the trees. Part of the crews had been allowed to come ashore to see the wonders of this strange land. The others crowded the rails or climbed the two castles, without observing anything at all remarkable, though working their imaginations to see things that were not there.

Cuevas had to leave Lucero on receiving a call from señor Gil Perez, warden of the "Santa Maria." With Perez was an old sailor who, Fernando was at once to learn, was warden on the Niña."

"Here," said Perez to his companion, "is the young man you are to take with you aboard the caravel. I judge him a likely boy, myself; but he has been keeping bad company, listening to that Irishman señor Martin Alonso saddled on us and who has proved, as we might have expected, to be a man you can't trust out of your sight!"

Cuevas looked in amazement from one warden to the other, realizing little except that something terrible was happening to him.

"Your pack is aboard the flagship," Perez continued, turning to Fernando. "I will have it sent to the 'Niña' where you will be broom boy as you were with us. Now, on your new boat, young man, respect and obedience,

and no back talk! Your warden will be this man here. I know him well. He has a good heart, but his hand is heavier even than mine."

Recovering a little from his surprise, Cuevas began to stammer:

"They are changing my boat? But why, why? What have I done?"

"You know that better than anybody else," Perez continued. "The Admiral has found out that you were mixed up in all that talk of a mutiny that took place aboard the full-rigger. I don't mind telling you that the man who complained was the Admiral's Master-at-table, and another person backed him up—señor Pero Gonzalez, no less, a man of great experience, much respected by the Admiral—and he is also a friend of Their Highnesses. We can overlook certain things in sailors on a voyage like this, where good seamen are necessary. But the business of a 'broom' is to keep his mouth shut on all occasions . . ."

Again addressing his comrade from the "Niña," Perez added:

"So that's the end of that question! Take him along in your boat, and make a sailor of him. But before he gets to be that, he must learn to obey the rules and not talk too much."

Cuevas looked wildly about him, unable to collect his thoughts. There Lucero stood, a few steps away; and from the expression on her face, he could see that she had heard. A common thought must have flashed through both their minds. This was the work of Gonzalez! The Butler had procured Fernando's transfer to the smaller of the caravels as a punishment for invented crimes! He would now find Lucero without a protector on the flagship, at the mercy of Terreros who would mal-

treat her as a subordinate, and within his own reach should the opportunity offer!

Gil Perez's heavy hand fell on Fernando's shoulder and pushed the youth around toward the beach where the boat from the caravel was waiting. There was no time for a word with Lucero!

"Good-bye!" he waved to her, as he saw the tears gathering in her eyes.

She was soon out of sight.

But a few yards farther on Cuevas saw someone else, and a ray of hope came into the despair that was engulfing him. It was Garvey, and though the Irishman did not speak, there was a smile of promise on his face.

He was to continue on the "Santa Maria"; and even if Cuevas were far away, Lucero would not be alone!

CHAPTER IX

ADAM AND EVE AND THE SERPENT

For fourteen days the fleet sailed, picking its way through numerous islands which the Admiral hastily surveyed for gold or for vestiges of the opulent civilization that prevailed in the realms of the Grand Khan.

The first island, known to the natives as Guanahani, he had called "San Salvador" in homage to the Saviour who had brought success to the voyage. The second isle he named "Santa Maria de la Concepcion," in gratitude to the Virgin who had spared him storms at sea and sickness aboard; the third he called "Fernandina" in honor of the King, whose servants and familiars had supported his petitions; and the fourth, "Isabella," in compliment to the Queen who had made his voyage possible. Every day new land came into view. Everyone from captains down to the lowest deck hands kept eager eyes on the outlying prospect, expecting from moment to moment that some great city would rise from the green depths of forest or come peering around some surf-rimmed promontory.

Fernando Cuevas was the only person indifferent to this changing scene. For him the arrival off the shores of the Grand Khan which at first had brought to him and to Lucero a thrill of relief, a sense of new found freedom, had ended as a moment of separation which for

the time was complete and might be for always. His one consolation was that the "Niña," being as slow a boat as the "Santa Maria" for the most part kept company with the flagship; or, as the vessels halted in some deep cove, cast its anchor near the full-rigger that bore the Admiral and his page. At times it was even possible for him to see Lucero's slender figure on the poop of the "Santa Maria," and once he was able to exchange greetings with her by waving his cap.

Vicente Yañez Pinzon, captain of the "Niña," took a liking to this page who had been recruited under bond of his elder brother. And the twenty or more sailors of the caravel, all of them born at Niebla and cousins, at least, to one another, accepted the broom from the flagship as one of themselves. That Cuevas should have criticized the Admiral on the matter of the discovery—so gossip was reporting the charge against him—was no great crime in their eyes. All the sailors on the two caravels thought the prize of ten thousand *maravedis* should go to de Triana; and this feeling was overtly expressed on the "Pinta" where the popularity of don Cristobal was rapidly waning.

In the hope that something might happen to end his separation from Lucero, Cuevas always volunteered for the fishing expeditions in the long boat of the "Niña," or for the tramps ashore with "Master Diego," the herbarian, who was keeping a sharp lookout for the spice trees so much desired by the Admiral. Two conflicting impulses were at war in the soul of this complicated and devious man. Don Cristobal could not help admiring countries which he was discovering, because he was discovering them. At the same time, he had to recognize, with a chagrin ill-controlled, that the streets of this paradise were not paved with gold; and he began to rake

his brain, as a business man, to find ways and means of squeezing profit from it.

Isabella was a paradise of fragrance—one continuous splendor of flowers in bloom which sent their perfumes out for miles over the Ocean to meet the visitors and fill their lungs with an air rank with delightful essences hitherto unknown to men. The Spaniards there found fruits which were as delicious to the nostrils as to the palate itself. But vainly did Master Diego, and others who had had experience with trees and flowers, explore these forest gardens. They found nothing resembling the cinnamon, the pepper, the nutmeg, the clove, of which the Admiral had brought such costly samples from his friends in Seville. It was a question of other perfumes, other substances. Unfortunately almost none of the fruits they found were yet ripe—it seemed to be springtime in these islands, though November was at hand. It was suggested, therefore, that perhaps the spices to be found might be as good as those of Asia, if one might take them at the proper season. But this happy thought, born of the dreams of gold and spice, of spice and gold, with which they all had set out from Palos, failed to console the Admiral, and especially the Pinzons. Alas, spices were as rare as gold in this verdant paradise!

Penetrating more deeply sometimes into these islands which were always green and fertile and inhabited by savages without property, the Admiral and his men would come upon "lakes of fresh water, girted about by groves that were a marvel to behold, and grasses as tall and tender as the best of the Andalucian April, among which birds sang so sweetly that a man would wish never to depart therefrom. Flocks of parrots and parrakeets darkened the sun, and so other birds marvel-

ously different from ours. The trees were of a thousand species, each with fruits after its kind, all wondrously fragrant. I am the most pained man in the world not to know them, for I am certain that they are all of value; and of them I am bringing specimens, as well as of the grass."

So wrote the Admiral in his log. But the fleet had not crossed the Ocean to enjoy pleasant scenery. Besides, to explore the coasts of so many islands "many manners of wind are necessary and the wind doth not always blow as men would choose." Everyone agreed that it was better to go on to "places where there was big traffic."

At times the poverty and the Adam-like ingenuousness of this earthly paradise of islands made the Admiral doubt his readings. Could this be a world cut off from the great realms of Asia? Marco Polo had said nothing about islands that were poor in gold but divinely beautiful, where men went naked, and knew neither wealth nor poverty, where peoples had no history, and took no thought for the morrow, but lived from day to day apart from all the artificial complications of a civilized world, subject to no laws and restraints save those imposed by Nature!

Here indeed was humanity before the Fall! Months later, when the philosophers then living in the Europe of the Renaissance were to learn of what Columbus had seen, these islands were to be compared with the utopias dreamed of by the Ancients—an impression that was to endure for two centuries and a half. Thinking of these natives of the Virgin Isles, Rousseau and other writers of the French Revolution were still to attribute to primitive man all sorts of virtues which civilized men had lost. It was a world by itself, uncontaminated by the involutions and the injustices of organized society—the Conti-

nent of a kindly, smiling humanity, without malice, without guile!

And out of the sea came "Cuba!"

If, on landing at what is now the port of Jibara, don Cristobal failed to find great ships of Asiatic merchants and soldiers and officials of the Grand Khan, he saw a land so beautiful that it drew from him exclamations of delight:

"Such a thing I never saw in my life!"

The intoxicating sweetness of the tropics enveloped the Discoverer, inspiring him to freer flights of fancy. The rivers were not like those he had seen in Africa, huge but pestilential, bringing down from the virgin forests inland great masses of rotting vegetation which darkened the waters and harbored swarms of animal life. These streams were deep and clear, of pure waters. Their mouths and estuaries abounded in mollusks bearing mother-of-pearl (this gave the Discoverer dreams of fabulous harvests of pearls). There were fish of the greatest variety in color and shape, and tortoises of valuable shell. The sloping beaches were of clean sand and the debouchments of the streams so broad that ships could easily manoeuvre in them.

"Trees are abundant," wrote the Admiral, "beautiful and green, with blossoms and fruits each after its kind. Fowl also are numerous, with small birds that sing very sweetly. The palms are different from ours and from those in Guinea. They are of medium height, without the outer bark one finds in Africa. The leaves are very large and the natives use them to thatch their dwellings."

But "Cuba" was not Cipango—for the reason, as the Admiral saw it, that "the Cuba of the natives was not an island and therefore could not be Cipango." A long sail along the northern coast of Cuba proved to Colum-

bus that it was mainland, an Asian cape, an advanced promontory of China. The great cities of Zayte and Kinsay, described by Marco Polo, must be located, he figured, some three hundred miles from the region of the sea he was now traversing!

At Guanahani (San Salvador) the Admiral had taken several captives, the numbers of which were increased as the fleet proceeded. Some of these escaped by swimming at the first opportunity; the others remained submissively aboard, though their unintelligible chatter served the Spaniards less as a guide than as a confirmation of their Delirious Geography. People are ever willing to find in reality the things they have in their heads. It was sufficient for the Spaniards to distinguish some group of syllables in the language of the natives that bore a remote resemblance to the supposed names of Asiatic cities for them to be convinced that the lands of the Grand Khan could not be far away. The natives pointed to scars on their bodies and pronounced the word "Carib"; and the Admiral was sure that the "Caribs" were not "cannibals," but soldiers and sailors of the Grand Khan who came every year to collect tributes and cargoes of gold and pearls, much as the fleets of Solomon had sailed to Ophir in days gone by. They stammered something that sounded like "Kami," a great chief who lived in the interior of Cuba. It was at once decided that here, at last, was the Grand Khan, and the Admiral despatched two "ambasadors" (one Torres, a Jew of Murcia, attended by one Jerez, sailor of Huelva) to deliver the Latin credentials which don Cristobal held from the King and Queen.

While awaiting the return of the "embassy," the Admiral decided to beach his vessels in a deep bay in Cuba, that their bottoms might be cleaned and recaulked. It

was a Sunday when the decision was announced, and the holiday accorded to everyone was the greatest day of the voyage for Fernando and Lucero. Just as Cuevas was landing in the long boat from the "Niña," Lucero appeared from the "Santa Maria" in the Admiral's tender. They could be free and together for the whole day! A holiday atmosphere pervaded the personnel of the fleet. The sailors were going off in all directions to visit these strange lands, inhabited by a strange but friendly people. Even Pero Gonzalez seemed momentarily to have forgotten the two lovers. As partner in the expedition (to an extent more modest, to be sure, than the Pinzons), he had a private interest in these verdant forests, which might be exploited for fruits and gums; and he had an eagle eye for all native adornments, hoping that at last he might discover in them some traces of pearl or gold.

By virtue of his many expeditions with "Master Diego" and the fishing boats, Cuevas was feeling himself an experienced explorer. He had often eaten in the "bohios" (huts) of the natives. He knew their common articles of food. From one of his landings he had brought back a painted "hamac" of native manufacture with the idea of giving it to Lucero. He had no fears now about setting out into this wonderful wilderness on this beautiful Sunday morning.

The lovers were in high spirits as they advanced along the shores of the Cuban bay. Shortly they came upon a group of sailors from the two caravels trying to establish contacts with some aged Indians, painted red and white, but otherwise quite naked save for scant cotton braids tied about their loins. Their coarse hair was knotted on the backs of their heads as in a queue, while in front it was cut sharply off in a curve above their eyes. Another Indian, one of those from Guanahani, was trying

to interpret in signs the half dozen words he had understood of all these native patriarchs were saying. They were describing the riches of an isle they called "Babeque," pointing into the far distance, as though "Babeque" also were one of those phantom islands off the Canaries which let themselves be seen for a moment but then vanished into the depths of the Ocean whenever men tried to set foot on them.

Farther along another group of men from the fleet, for the most part apprentices and "brooms," stood silently gazing at some Indian bohios, attracted by the nakedness of the Indian girls. Married women seemed to be partly dressed in little clouts of braided cotton, but the younger females were entirely naked, and their bodies always were agile and well-shapen—how could things be otherwise with a race which practiced infanticide, destroying every new born child of frail health or imperfect form? The young Spaniards, keeping their distance, held out glass beads, bits of mirrors, gilt buttons, nails; and the copper-skinned beauties with thick oily hair would show their sharp teeth in smiles and reply with words which the sailors would interpret as invitations to come nearer.

Here again was a group gathered in a circle about what seemed to be a fire. A thin column of clear blue smoke was rising from the center, as though a religious ceremony were being celebrated, with the burning of gifts to unknown divinities. On approaching, Lucero and Fernando saw a number of Indians seated with their wives on the ground, males and females alike holding a smouldering ember of rolled leaves, which they kept lifting to their mouths to inhale the smoky vapor.

Ever since Guanahani, the Admiral and his scouts had been coming upon these dried leaves, not only in

the huts ashore, but also in the canoes at sea. At first they had taken them for a kind of food, though a few tastes of them had made the white men sick. It was in this Cuban inlet that Europeans first saw rolls of this so-called *tabaco* or "tobacco" in actual use. Some of the Admiral's sailors were piqued by curiosity to try the smoke themselves. They would take one of the burning brands from an Indian and suck at it, only to hand it back, coughing or even vomiting. Others, on the contrary, seemed to enjoy it, and kept at it for some time, laughing and joking at this strange sport, good for one trial at least. None of those then present could have dreamed that these poor and forgotten subjects of the Grand Khan, who had not yet learned even the use of clothes and did not know the value of gold, would shortly convert the whole civilized world to this one of their customs, which was destined to become the most universal and tolerated of the vices.

Cuevas also decided to take a breath of the bluish smoke from one of the smoking brands—he could not shrink, in the presence of Lucero, from something that the best sailors on the ship were doing. His first puffs provoked coughs and sensations of disgust which he was put to it to suppress. But after this exertion of will he found a certain soothing pleasure in these terribly fragrant leaves. When the lovers had walked away and sat down under one of the first trees in the forest nearby, Lucero also felt a woman's whim to test the smoking brand which Alonso had brought along as a curiosity. The first breaths brought tears to her eyes; but her companion, amused at an experience which he had just been through, encouraged her to go on by alternating puffs with her. So they sat there sharing the roll of leaves for some time; but suddenly Lucero was sea-sick, she said,

as sea-sick as she had been that first day out on the voyage! The suggestion turned Fernando's stomach also and his head began to whirl.

It was the end of their expedition for that day. Nauseated, sleepy, their skins dripping with a cold sweat, they could not move from their seats under the tree, but sat there all the afternoon, till it began to grow dark, and they had to take their boats to return to their ships. It was a matter of general orders that everyone should be on board again for the singing of the *Salve*.

"Lucero, come! We must hurry back!" said Fernando, much as he had tried to rouse her on the road to Cordoba.

His uneasiness was all the greater because, in the distance, he could see the boat of the flagship, calling in the last stragglers and about to put off, and standing near it, leaning on a walking stick, the tall figure of the former Royal Butler.

So Cuevas would have to consign Lucero in her helpless plight into the hands of those sailors, who would surely be at the orders of Gonzalez!

But he heard a voice calling his name from a distance, down the beach:

"Andujar, hurry! Your warden is looking for you. He is waiting to put off! You'll catch it, when you get there! Let me attend to your brother, and run!"

It was the Irishman, Garvey, and he took Lucero by an arm and half carried her off toward her boat; though the girl seemed to gather strength from his whispered words, and was able finally to walk of her own accord. Fernando for his part scarcely felt the blows that his warden rained upon his head and shoulders in punishment for being late; his eyes were fixed upon the tender of the flagship, to see the fate of Lucero. Gonzalez, in fact, could not restrain a gesture of surprise and annoy-

ance at her arrival in company with the Irishman. He had not thought of her going ashore; but now when he again had her within reach, again this Irishman was in the way, as though of deliberate purpose! And he had to watch Garvey help her aboard the ship, carry her to the poop and set her down at the Admiral's door, without his having had one chance to say a word to her!

On the following morning, the "Santa Maria" was beached, and all her own crew with most of the sailors from the caravels set busily to work, cleaning her bottom of the weeds and barnacles that had come on during the voyage. The vessel was heeled over on the fine white sand. Great cauldrons of pitch were set boiling over fires on the strand, the thick smoke drowning for a long time the fragrance of the neighboring forests. Apprentices carried the pitch about in long iron ladles and dripped it on the planks that had just been scraped.

In order to oversee this important work in person, don Cristobal had given up any thought of expeditions ashore. This left Lucero free all day. Fernando also had been excused from work on the vessel. The plants he had gathered on days preceding had much pleased the herbist, Master Diego, who had judged him an intelligent, willing youth, well suited to this branch of the explorations. The apothecary had asked the Admiral to send the boy out again to pick grasses and flowers in the neighborhood, and Master Diego easily secured permission for Lucero to accompany him.

Once more traversing the village of bohios on the shore, the two young people plunged deep into the green shadows of the tropical forest. It seemed much more lonely and awesome to them now than on the day before. Now there were no Spaniards about the edges, and the Indians also had disappeared. Everybody was on the

beach about the grounded flagship, or on board the caravels which were waiting their turn to go ashore. Inside the circle of foliage that lined the water's edge, everything human seemed to have been overwhelmed under an exuberance of vegetation and a palpitant fecundity of animal life.

It was surprise on surprise, as they went forward through this tangle of verdure, where the tallest trees seemed to be interwoven with the lowest plants and flowers by vast curtains of vine. Here and there, through colonnades of tree trunks less closely twined, they would catch glimpses of the free Ocean gleaming out beyond the mouth of the stream—no longer blue or green, but pearly, opalescent, pink, through the contrasts of light and shade. The shoals along the coast, left wet and shining by the ebbed tide, looked like ridges of pure copper held down to the surface of the sea by clamps of marine shells and ropes of green seaweed. There were keys that looked like crowned heads arising from the water with diadems of aquatic plants, and schools of fish—golden, red, vermillion—sporting and sparkling about them. At the mouth of the river, and waving over the sand, began the thickets of river-reeds that plunged their roots deep into the mud till they were below the reach of the salt water.

The two pages had to open violent passage through some of the walls of foliage—barriers of vines and flower-covered bushes swarming with an invisible and noisy insect life. Fernando had borrowed a knife from an apprentice on the flagship, and cutting with this weapon and pulling with his strong arms he would always succeed in finding a passage for himself and his companion. But each of these perforations would provoke a clamorous flight of frightened animals—insects with cuirasses

like colored gems, some green as emeralds, others red as rubies, and others of the soft blue of sapphire; butterflies that went flying off like great winged flowers; parrots and parrakeets which would start up from the trees overhead and fly off to others farther along, keeping up meantime a continuous chatter with their almost human voices; monkeys that would scamper along the horizontal branches, and stand on their legs to throw rains of green fruit to the ground; humming birds and flybirds—little jewels of moving color as delicate as Chinese silk! Each bevy of parrots, as it rose, sent down a shower of leaves upon the two adventurers, and smaller birds would take to flight before the noisy protest of these large talkative fowls with hooked beaks, eyes of human cunning, red heads, and coats now green, now yellow, now blue.

In other places the forest was utterly silent. The insects and the parrots, as well as silent songless birds that seemed to speak noisily to the eye with the multicolored silks of their plumage, clung to the edges of the forest where the open would be within easy reach. In such spots, giant ferns wove their leaves into mats overhead, making domes impenetrable to the direct beams of the sun. The light, rather, filtered in around them, scattered, diffused, green. As Fernando and Lucero made their way through them, their faces would take on a livid radiance as though they were floating under water in the sea; while the ground under their feet, ever oozing with moisture, would seem as wet as a submarine floor.

The drainage from all this damp would seek the nearest hollows and form ponds, that would in turn be covered by thick growth of leaves, round and hard as shields of steel, and sprinkled among them, water lilies. Dead and stagnant to the eye, such pools were always alive

with invisible animals—"crocodiles, alligators, and other beasts," as the Admiral wrote in description of the New World fauna.

A rustle of dry leaves and the crumbling of foliage brought the two young people to a stop in their path; and then they descried, unfolding a short distance before them like a coiled rope, the yellow, black and green skin of the spotted "boob snake" of the tropical forests, more redoubtable in appearance than in fact, perpetual devourer of the insect, the bird, and the smaller reptile, but timid and fleeting before the step of man.

In spite of the presence of her sturdy lover, Lucero gradually lost courage in the presence of this dark dank mystery. It was as though all the fears instilled in her by the tales of her girlhood were suddenly coming to life, to destroy her interest in the strange and beautiful insects and flowers which Fernando was gradually accumulating for the herbist, Master Diego.

"Let's get out into the open!" she begged, pointing instinctively in the direction in which, a half hour before, she had noticed a glimmer of the sea. The wall of green about her had come to seem like a stifling prison. She needed a breath of free air, a touch of warm sunlight, an unobstructed view out over the limitless expanse of the Ocean.

They started off on a straight line, breaking through the vines in front of them, bringing down showers of dead leaves upon their heads, and provoking a great commotion among monkeys and parrots. They would sink into leaf-covered puddles up to their knees, and stagger out with a loathing creepy feeling as they saw crawling things make off into the shrubbery from under their feet.

They came out into a space where the vegetation was

lower and less crowded, and groves of great trees reached down to a sea-beach of fine sand. There they threw off their wet shoes to feel the warmth of the hot golden sand, and then they went nearer to the water where the beach was still wet from the previous tide.

They were now very far from the mouth of the estuary. This beach belonged to the ocean shore, though it sloped seaward very gradually under a water that was smooth, motionless, and crystal pure. There was no surf. Outlying bars, so distant and so low as to be barely visible, despite the moderate breakers that could eventually be spied upon them, created this vast but sheltered pool. Beyond the bars stretched the vast Antillian ocean of increasing blue as it neared the shores. The light ripples outside glittered like fire under a sunlight overflowing with stimulating energies.

After so many days at sea, Fernando was already acquiring a mariner's eye for the peculiarities of the Ocean surface, noting and interpreting the least disturbances on the liquid plain. Beyond the bars he could see black streaks darting swiftly this way and that, and in the middle of each streak a short black triangular fin. Sharks were the ever vigilant watchmen of these ocean lanes formed by the angulations of so many islands. They had come out to meet the fleet off Guanahani, and had followed the evolutions of the vessels ever since, lying rapaciously in wait for anything that might come overboard. All kinds of smaller fish swarmed in the waters of this inner lagoon, hiding among the rocks on its bottom and procreating there, as though this were a great artificial pound for their breeding.

At various intervals along the beach Lucero and her companion could climb far out into the deep water by leaping from rock to rock to enjoy the glassy splendors

of the deeper pools cut by darting rays of color as the fish shot away in fright. There were short fat almost spherical ones, with forked tails and scales the color of whitened gold. There were others of fiery gold, wooden gold, lemon gold, green gold, some with dorsals the length of their backs and with white or purple spots on their flanks. At the bottom of holes so still and clear that only the splash of a stone could distinguish them from glass, great bivalves opened wide their pearly shells, slowly moving the mucous masses that dwelt inside like tongues of gelatine. Little crustaceans flitted about the conques and madrepores like insects in a forest. Farther out from shore medusas could be seen, holding their red or violet bordered heads aloft just under the surface of the water, gently propelling themselves along by slight movements of their edges, which were tipped with numerous feet of inoffensive pulp.

The beauty of this maritime paradise awakened new trains of thought in the two young people. The labyrinth of green through which they had just forced their way had overawed them with its murmuring solitude of trees, birds and embowered foliage. They had hardly once thought of themselves. Besides they were always confronted by possibilities of danger, whether from wild animals or savage men. Wonder was always crossed by fear. They had never felt free to indulge in one of those moments of relaxation which would expose them to surprise. But here on the shore of an open sea they felt confident and safe again.

Why not swim? It was as though this paradise of sea and forest, full of color and light and eternal youth, gave them that same natural innocence of the Indians who lived with a frank and childlike openness in the face of Nature, as did Adam and Eve before the Fall.

The impetuous "broom" was out of his clothes in an instant, and turning toward the sea, he dived headlong from the top of a rock. A second later he came to the surface, blowing and puffing like a Triton, passing a hand over his drenched hair, and treading water with motions of legs and arms that sent out waves in circles over the placid mirror of the lagoon.

"It's warm! It's warm!" he cried. "As good as a Moorish bath! Come in, come in!"

Hesitating a moment, and looking furtively about this way and that, the Admiral's valet sought the shelter of a boulder and began taking off her clothes. This youthful Jewess was slenderer of body than her companion, with the leanness peculiar to a race which seems to have exaggerated all proportions of weight, producing women now excessively obese and now so thin that their extraordinary delicacy seems hardly compatible with the essential demands of life. But Lucero rapidly lost the appearance of a sickly youth as her nudity progressed. The curves of her breast and hips, her long narrow ankles, the arch of her back had none of the traits of masculinity.

Anxious as she was to avoid surprise, the girl did not dare imitate her lover and plunge headlong into the lagoon. She stepped from the shelter of the rock, ran rapidly down the beach and into the water, where Cuevas was waiting for her just within her depth. She gave cries of delight as she began to swim, then others of fear as she found that her feet no longer touched the bottom; and she dug her hands into Fernando's strong shoulders and threw her arms about his neck, to seek support.

More than an hour they passed sporting in that quiet lagoon where the water, as the noon day sun touched the zenith, seemed to sleep in an ever profounder calm.

Then they went ashore, accustomed now to each other's nudity, walking about with the self-possession of the naked Indians they had seen the day before.

"I am hungry!" Lucero suddenly exclaimed. "I am hungry!"

They went to a tree that stood on the edge of the forest, and ate of its fruit, though they did not know its name. Going farther along the beach they came upon a brook, running seaward doubtless from one of the ponds in the forest, but with the water pure and sweet. They got down on all fours, like animals, and drank, laughing gaily at each other as they lifted their faces and saw them dripping with wet.

"I am tired!" said Lucero.

They spied at some distance an enormous tree that stood out from the forest on the shore all by itself, apparently suffocating with its thick shade all minor plants and trees that might have contested its enjoyment of exclusive rights to the sunshine and the cool salt air of the sea. For centuries, perhaps, it had stood there watching the sun rise over the far away rim of the Ocean, and feeling the chill of evening as the sun went down behind the tangled wilderness near by. The branches curled gracefully upward to form a bower for all the delights of that savage Nature—clusters of blossoms, songs of birds, dense gusts of perfume. From scars on its trunk oozed a thick sap that congealed into a hard amber colored gum. Great roots went out in all directions, like the backs of dark, much-knotted serpents that might have hidden their heads far away in the ground.

Naked, their bodies still glowing from the recent swim, the boy and the girl sat down in one of the moss covered nooks between the roots. Prompted by an instinctive fear Lucero suddenly said:

"No, let's go back! Let's not stay here!"

"Why look farther?" answered Fernando. "We could not find a cooler place!"

The day, now at high noon, was indeed hot. Out from forest came great waves of steaming fragrance, that seemed to sweep under the cool defences of the tree that was protecting them and drown them in a sweetly intoxicating swoon. Lucero's delicate form sank comfortably into the soft moss, and as Fernando sat gently caressing her hand, her head drooped and she fell asleep. Fernando sat there for a long time without moving, his eyes looking out over the dazzling sea. And soon he too was asleep, his arm limply resting over Lucero's shoulder.

Out from the forest came the melodious song of the mocking bird, deceived by the dense shade of the foliage and thinking that night had come. A pair of turtle-doves came and sat on one of the branches of the giant tree, gurgling their love song among its green leaves. On the ground underneath slept two naked forms, sunk in the sweet exhaustion of their morning's activities.

Neither Fernando nor Lucero heard a rustle of dry leaves in the woods behind them, nor a sliding movement in the grass nearer at hand. But among the black roots of their shelter, moved another root also black, but spotted with little circular stains of red and yellow. Attracted doubtless by the sound of human breathing, a long tropical snake lifted its head from the ground and looked down at the two sleepers out of its two glasslike eyes. It reared higher and higher on its tail, and then stood still, as though it were the Serpent of Temptation about to address Adam or Eve in this New World Paradise.

But then suddenly it drew in its head, turned tail and darted swiftly away into the woods. It had been alarmed

by a crackling of branches different from the ordinary sounds of wind in the trees.

There were some moments of absolute silence. The two lovers slept placidly on.

Had they been awake, they might have seen a man's head appear over the wheel of tree roots, and then the form of a man stride forward till it stood at the foot of the tree. The man was dressed in the fashion of the whites. There was no sword on his left side, but in his belt he carried a long sailor's knife.

The man started with surprise and then looked down at the two nudities sleeping at his feet. But then his gaze halted on the more slender of the two forms, enticing with feminine rotundities. In his eyes gleamed the phosphorescent glow of a carnal desire, which gradually softened at the bidding of a meditative reflection.

Had Fernando been awake he would have known the man. He would have recognized William Garvey.

The Irishman had had a busy day. For a time he had worked with the other sailors about the hull of the "Santa Maria"; but shortly the once Royal Butler, after loitering about in company with the Admiral, had decided to make an excursion on his own account into the nearby wilderness. Garvey observed that Gonzalez had taken the direction just previously followed by Fernando and Lucero. So, choosing the proper moment, he slipped away from his work, and followed the trail of Gonzalez. This desertion he knew he would have to pay for with some severe punishment or other; but he was willing to risk it, to take advantage of an opportunity he had long been seeking. On shipboard, the pompous Butler had enjoyed exceptional protection as a friend of the Admiral. In the woods along the shore there were now only Master Diego, the herbarian, the two boys,

Fernando and Lucero, and this man, his enemy. The thick undergrowth would offer plenty of chances to repay a few insults without interference from others!

It was two hours before Garvey actually caught sight of his enemy. He noticed that the man's trail never went deep into the woods, but followed the edges, whence in a few steps it would be possible to reach the shore. Eventually Gonzalez also caught sight of Garvey, and made a move in his direction. He thought he would ask the Irishman with whose permission he had abandoned his work, and why he was following him. But though he was armed with a sword and a stout stick, the sight of the knife at the sailor's belt counseled prudence. The Butler decided rather to avoid the encounter and shake off the Irishman's pursuit by devious twists and turns in his path inside the thicket. This would mean losing the trail of Fernando and Lucero, which he had been following; but it would mean escaping the vengeance of the Irishman whom he had beaten!

Garvey in fact was shortly lost in the woods, except that his keen sense of hearing always gave him the bearings of the shore. He gave up the chase of Gonzalez and made for the distant roar of the surf.

He came out into the open near a great tree.

A snake fled from among the gnarled roots as he approached.

Just beyond, to his astonishment, he came upon the two pages—and one of them was a girl!

Garvey did not disturb them, but went off on his way back toward the beach.

Fernando and Lucero did not awaken for a long time. When they sat up they saw about them the same canorous green; the same stretch of golden sand, the same peaceful lagoon sparkling in the sun of late afternoon;

and beyond the bars, seaward, the same streaks of black pierced by black fins, moved as are all the organism of creation from the simplest to the most perfect and complex by two necessities which control all human beings as the most vigorous springs of human action:

Hunger and Love!

CHAPTER X

THE VENGEANCE OF THE YELLOW GOD

Four days went by, and the Murcian "convert" with the sailor from Ayamonte, envoys of the Admiral, were back with the fleet. They had not found the Grand Khan, nor had they seen any king who was friend or enemy of that powerful Monarch. They had penetrated some forty miles inland to reach a village of fifty houses inhabited by a population which they put at about a thousand—the huts seemed to be community dwellings, each sheltering a large number of natives.

Torres and Jerez had been welcomed like gods by the savages, men and women running out to meet them, to touch them with their fingers admiringly as beings come from heaven, and to kiss their hands and feet.

The Spaniards inquired for the king of the country; but in spite of the good offices of an interpreter from the fleet, no one could satisfy their curiosity. A few individuals seemed to stand out among the natives as leaders—distinguished from the others especially by their greater fatness; but not one of these naked, painted and well fed "leading citizens" bore the least resemblance to the omnipotent "King of Kings" who ruled the vast empire of the East. Then the samples of cinnamon, pepper, and other spices from Seville were exhibited. Yes, such things were abundant in the coun-

try, but not just there—off to the East, far off toward the East!

The disappointment could not have been more complete; and the Admiral could see no reason now for not hurrying on to those lands toward which the "Indians" kept pointing whenever they were asked about gold and pearls: toward Babeque, or Bohio, as it might be named, or even "Caritaba," for so the natives also called the island where people wore pearls and gold on hands, legs, and arms!

The vessels had been successfully floated, so on Thursday, the eleventh of November, the Admiral provided in general orders:

"In the name of God, South East, to find gold, spices, and new lands." And the fleet set out, the "Pinta" as usual in the lead, the "Niña" and the flagship following abreast at a distance of some miles.

To be underway again was a source of great unhappiness to Cuevas. Those moments in the forest on the shores of the Cuban estuary had been the happiest of his life. Now this second separation seemed to him even more painful than the one on Guanahani, the day of the Discovery. His only relief, during hours off duty, was to stand at the rail of the "Niña" and gaze across the water at the "Santa Maria" in hope of catching some distant glimpse of Lucero's youthful figure. But even this recourse failed him at night, when the flagship was nothing but a few blinking lights, or at the most a black dot on a starlit horizon.

With a certain determination born of his despair he was applying himself to the study of the language spoken by the captives on board—there was now a goodly number on each ship—whom the sailors were beginning to call "Indians."

This was an idea of the Admiral's, according to a conversation Fernando overheard between the captain, Vicente Yañez, and his navigator.

"The Admiral says that all these lands we keep seeing are part of the Indies described in the books. There are three 'Indies,' according to him: one about the Indus and the Ganges, to the Eastward of the Red Sea; the second beyond the Ganges to the East; and finally this third one, where we now are, comprising Cathay, which is sometimes called China, and other dominions of the Grand Khan. Don Cristobal had read the books and he knows Asia the way we know the West Coast of Spain."

On the twenty-first of November, the fleet reached the eastern end of Cuba (the Admiral had named it "Juana"), and struck its true course to the southeast. The vessels were still in the usual order, the "Pinta," better canvased and better handled, far in the lead, and making the usual "stabs" to south and north, without delaying the slower boats behind her. But at nightfall, on the third day out, the head wind freshened, the sea grew heavier, and the Admiral suddenly decided to return to the sheltered haven in the estuary which he had named the Cape of Palms, postponing the sail to "Bohio," or "Babeque," till the elements should show themselves more favorable. Acting at once upon this design, he brought the flagship about, signalling his change of course by lights on his mastheads. The "Niña," nearby, also came about, following the Admiral in his retirement. The "Pinta" however, some miles in the lead, held on through the dark, without observing that the two ships astern had dropped out of sight.

Lucero, constantly frequenting the quarterdeck, in the course of her duties, could see that the separation of the vessels of the squadron was the source of much bitterness

on the "Santa Maria." The Admiral regarded Martin Alonso's "act" as outright disobedience, forgetting, for that matter, that the Pinzons were figuring in the expedition not as subordinates but as partners. It was evident, also, that if the "Pinta" had failed to come about, it was because she had not seen the signals on the flagship. A more experienced sailor than the Admiral, Martin Alonso could not have been so much impressed by the "bad weather;" and though the wind was contrary it would never have occurred to him that there was any real reason for halting the voyage. The once Royal Butler, meantime, kept fanning the Admiral's wrath by imaginary fears as to the rectitude of the elder Pinzon. The "Pinta" also had a number of prisoners; and Gonzalez suggested that Martin Alonso had had revelations from some of these which impelled him to explorations on his own account. Everybody knew there was gold on "Babeque." If Martin Alonso got there first, he might take possession of it in his own name!

The winds held unfavorable for some days and don Cristobal lingered very willingly about the beautiful bays of Cuba; but when the "Santa Maria" and the "Niña" finally sailed with wind astern, the lofty mountains of "Babeque" were soon in view. The scenery of this new island, which the natives were now calling "Haiti" reminded the Admiral of certain regions of Spain, and he gave it the name of "Española"—"Little Spain," the "Spanish Isle." Cuevas was hoping for another long stop in one of the numerous harbors the vessels kept entering. But the Admiral was now in a hurry to see more, and contented himself with sending boats ashore either to fish and hunt or to barter with the natives. The "broom" Andjuar did not find Lucero on any of these landings. The fleet, which had hitherto

encountered "Indians" either living in a state of Eden-like innocence or in rudimentary democracies, now began to find native monarchies. Don Cristobal thought this indicated closer proximity to the Grand Khan's influence, and chose to treat the "kings" he encountered with all the formalities of royalty. He invited them aboard his ship, and stripped his personal wardrobe bare to make them gifts. One day he even parted with the amber necklace which he had bought at Granada before setting out on the voyage. One other person also was extremely happy to have entered at last into realms of Divine Right. This was Diego de Arana, High Constable of the Fleet. The Cordoban *hidalgo* strutted in all his glory whenever one of these litter-borne sovereigns, attended by a veritable, though half-naked "court", came aboard the "Santa Maria" to pay his respects to the "Sons of Heaven." Gold ornaments were much more frequent in "Haiti" than on the other islands, and the native dignitaries would exchange large sheets of thin gold for any bit of broken crockery or any trinket the white man had to offer.

The Spaniards eventually discovered that the natives thought they were getting the better of the bargain. The palefaces were divine personages, and anything they had owned or touched must have some mystic influence on health or happiness. When questioned as to the sources of their gold the natives pointed inland and pronounced the word "Cibao," a place where even the stones and earth were made of gold! This was one of the happiest moments in the Admiral's voyage! Cibao was, of course, Cipango!

"We are close to the fount of all this gold," he cried cheerily to his intimates on the "Santa Maria," "and I

hope that with the guidance of Our Lord we shall soon reach it."

An aged medicine-man, who came aboard in one of the "royal" suites, spoke of certain kingdoms in Haiti where gold could be found in chunks and where the natives knew the art of smelting it and casting figures. The same man told of a previous visit of "Sons of Heaven" which had taken place years before, and hinted that palefaces were not pleasantly remembered in the country, because of the violence they had used in taking provisions aboard their "floating forest." But the Admiral's attention did not rest on this story, which might have proved instructive to him later on: his thoughts were wholly on "Cibao," and its mines of gold. Cibao, clearly, could not be far away. All the natives now seemed to know of it. In his emotion at the approach of the great treasure-land, he gave vent to his feelings in words of mystic excitement:

"May Our Lord, who holds all things in His hands, now aid me with His guidance! May His Mercy reveal to me these mines of gold of which all now are speaking!"

For don Cristobal, as for the Ancients, gold was a child of the Sun engendered in the womb of the Earth, an offspring of tellurgic witchery possessed of omnipotent influences or "virtues."

The amount of available gold has in modern times been much increased through the development of great deposits in California, Alaska, and South Africa. The ancient world had only small quantities of gold and the Middle Ages even less. At the time of the Discovery the yellow metal was much more highly esteemed than it is today.

Columbus, brother in science to the astrologers and the alchemists, was one of the last celebrated men of the Middle Ages. Over the mysterious Ocean and along the shores of the New Found World he was to bear the same imaginative yearnings, the same poetic enthusiasms, which fired those who baked their faces and snuffed out their years over blasts and retorts, melting with magic incantations combinations of metal from which they hoped some day gold would spring. These dreamers loved gold as the symbol of supreme victory, the mightiest conceivable cencentration of power, which would carry with it greater domination over men than any conqueror in history had ever wielded. The man who owned the secret of gold would be, regardless of birth or station, the lord of the whole earth!

The new Admiral Major of the Ocean Sea felt two forces stirring within him, the one which was later to be called the Middle Ages, in his day passing away; the other, the new Age, which we now see beginning in his time. He was a dreamer, but a dreamer with energy, like those hermits, of ardent eloquence, who kindled the Crusades. A merchant, hard headed in gain, as were all the traders of the Renaissance, he felt nevertheless a poetic thrill, a mystic stirring, a shudder of divine awe, when he thought himself on the threshold of a mine of gold comparable with King Solomon's. He felt his knees bowing in worship in this antechamber of the Yellow God, Son of the Sun and of Mother Earth, and monarch absolute of the world!

If the Admiral, as he sat meditating of an evening in the great chair of his cabin, was filled with such thoughts and feelings, not so his valet and page, Lucero, who was controlled by different though not less insistent preoccupations. Existence aboard such a tiny vessel as the

"Santa Maria" was perforce a promiscuous thing. There was scarcely a moment when she did not feel herself in the presence of her persecutor, a man who knew her secret, and might make use of it, she could not say when, for purposes she could not foresee. Fernando's banishment from the crew of the flagship was not only a sorrow to her lover: it was a menace to her personal safety.

Gonzalez was now seizing every pretext to approach her; and on one occasion, as she stood at the rail alone, looking out at a coastline which lay before the fleet, he stole up softly behind her and slipped an arm about her waist. She had freed herself after a struggle and taken refuge on the top deck of the after-castle. Then Gonzalez had called:

"I am going to tell the whole story to don Cristobal!"

Lucero, however, was sure he would not do so. The Admiral had established stern measures of discipline aboard, since so many female Indians had been taken captive. The women were kept apart, under guard, and no one of the ship's company was allowed to approach them. If Lucero's own sex were made known, she would be secluded with the Indian prisoners and the former Royal Butler would have to abandon all hope of possessing her. It was more likely that, at least until the fleet set sail on its return voyage, he would keep silent in the hope sometime of finding a favorable opportunity to press his suit. This left Lucero in perpetual alarm, in fear that at any moment she might be called upon to defend herself. She was passing the night completely dressed on her mattress at the Admiral's door, catching fitful periods of sleep and awakening at the slightest sound from the adjoining rooms.

If worse came to worst she had still one desperate

recourse—to tell everything to the Admiral herself! Don Cristobal would probably protect her, keeping her secret till the return to Spain, if not out of kindness to her —he had always been kind—then out of fear of the scandal that might ensue. Who would believe that he had been served by a woman for so many months without ever penetrating her disguise?

But what after the return to Spain? As Lucero confronted this seemingly inevitable denouement to her adventure, she could see only one outcome: conversion, a convent, separation from her lover forever! To confess the truth was hardly less disastrous than to fall into Gonzalez's hands. It was better therefore to go on waiting. Who could say what the mystery of each new day might bring forth? In this strange new world, on these wonderful unknown seas, Fortune might have the most improbable surprises in store for anyone!

For some days, after the arrival in Haiti, the Admiral had been in contact with a "king" named Guahanacari, who was being royally entertained with his "courtiers" aboard the flagship, and who had extended warm hospitality to the Spanish officers and sailors in his "dominions" ashore. Discovering that the main desire of the "Sons of Heaven" was to have gold, gold, gold, Guahanacari had promised to find gold; and he had invited all the palefaces to come and live on his shores, promising to give them, in exchange for such high honor, all the gold the vessels could carry. The Admiral decided, after long conferences with the "king" and the latter's wisemen, that the great gold mines lay farther along the shores of Haiti; and on a Monday, the day before Christmas, the fleet lifted anchors and was sailing along the coast before a gentle and favorable wind.

With such a glorious prospect of nearby wealth and

an end to the long voyage, the festivities of that Christmas Eve aboard the vessels were especially joyous and good-humored. The Admiral ordered the cooks to prepare the best dinner available for the sailors forward; and aft, among the people of the comand, Diego de Arana produced bottles of old Cordoba which he had secretly embarked. Even the page, Salcedo, drank abundantly; though it was not till afterwards that Lucero remembered with what urgency Terreros had forced the wine upon her, doubtless at a suggestion of "his lord," the once Royal Butler.

The banqueting was prolonged from the *Salve* to well beyond ten o'clock. The "brooms" and apprentices sang Christmas carols to the accompaniment of Andalucian guitars, and forward, on the prow, Garvey, the Irishman, played on his harp with unusual inspiration, mingling the silvery tinkles of his instrument with Irish folk songs remembered from his childhood and hummed in a drooning melancholy tone.

The night was clear, the sea calm. The Admiral himself went to bed at eleven o'clock, as did most of the company aboard. Only one sailor with the "brooms" at the bottle were left awake to tend the helm. What danger could there be on such a Holy Night with such perfect weather? "The sea is like a cup of milk," the Admiral remarked on entering his cabin. Eventually the sailor also tired of his solitary vigil. He entrusted the tiller to his "brooms" and, heavy with wine, lay down to sleep himself.

And yet, not everyone, aboard the "Santa Maria" was sunk in slumber. Lucero, in thinking dreamily of the evening's banquet and the drunkenness of many in the crew, had crept to a window in the living room of the after-castle, and lay looking out at the lights of the

"Niña," which was following the course of the flagship, but a mile or two farther off-shore.

Suddenly a pair of strong arms encircled her shoulders, her head was drawn back upon a man's breast, and a kiss was laid upon her youthful neck. Lucero was not taken by surprise—it was the danger which she had been fearing and which was at last presenting itself! She knew it was Gonzalez without seeing him. He was the only person who could come upon her this way, kiss her roughly with half-drunken passion, and wrestle with her as though trying to throw her to the deck. A thought flashed through her mind: Fernando was off there, in the night, on the "Niña"—he could not help her! But there was the Irishman, her one trustworthy friend on the flagship! Since the departure from the Cape of Palms Garvey had looked at her with even more interest than during the earlier part of the voyage.

With a violent spring she tore loose from the grasp of her assailant, and ran through the door of the living room, toward the ladder that led toward the prow. Even if Garvey were not still there with his harp, once beyond the chain she could feel safe from her pursuer!

Unsteady on his feet from too much wine Gonzalez did not overtake her till she had reached the foremast on the deck below. There again he was able to encircle her with his arms, kissing her avidly about the face despite the blows with her doubled fists and the scratching with her nails with which she did her best to hold him off.

"Garvey, Garvey!" she called desperately. "Help me, Guillermo Irés!"

The Irishman came up, as silently as a cat. It was as though he had been wandering about in the night and had seen everything! Gonzalez felt two strong hands fall upon his shoulders, and they tore him loose from his vic-

tim and turned him around in his tracks. Free from the man's clutch, Lucero staggered to the rail of the ship, and looked back at the two men, who were now facing each other.

Garvey was pointing to a black line which crossed the vessel from port to starboard:

"You have crossed the chain!" he said, with a fierce laugh. "I have been waiting for weeks to catch you here! This is my world and we are equals. Are you ready?"

And he struck Gonzalez a blow full in the face, which sent the former Royal Butler solidly back on his heels. But Gonzalez was not a coward; even had he been, pride of station, and his instinctive contempt for the lowly, would have held him to the spot. He returned the blow, and under the starlight the terrified Lucero could see the two men struggling with each other, the thuds of bare kunckles on hard bones sounding in the dark. But the Spaniard was no match for Garvey in this kind of combat without weapons. A terrific blow from the Irishman's fist suddenly stretched him full length on the deck, where he lay, groaning with pain, but cursing, untamed, between his gasps. Garvey leapt up to him, and put a foot on his breast as though he intended to fasten him in that manner to the deck.

But Lucero gave a cry of alarm:

"Look out, Garvey!"

Gonzalez had slyly put a hand to his belt and drawn his dagger. He was now aiming a blow at the leg which was holding him down.

Garvey twisted at the first sense of the cold steel—the thrust gave him only a scratch. Looking down at his still prostrate foe for an instant, as though to measure his own contempt, he said ominously:

"I can see I've got to kill you! I've got to rid the world of you, pastrymaker of the devil!"

And he was off!

But it was not in flight. Garvey was running to the stack of harpoons, in a deck-corner under the forecastle.

When he returned, Gonzalez was on his feet. The Butler's hand was clutching his dagger, and he was holding it, ready to strike, just below the level of his belt. But Garvey was armed with a harpoon, and using it as a club, he brought it down upon his enemy's head in a blow which Gonzalez only partially succeeded in parrying with his arm. The Butler fell to the deck, and Garvey advanced upon him, the three prongs of the harpoon this time pointed downward.

"I'll spike you to the deck as I would a snake!" he cried.

But just as he had raised the weapon and was aiming the blow, there came a violent shock. Garvey felt himself hurled forward, toward the prow of the vessel, as by an invisible force. The harpoon went flying from his hands, and as he hurtled forward he all but fell upon his adversary's body. The whole hull of the "Santa Maria" seemed to be groaning and writhing as in a death agony, the decks buckling, the beams quivering. Then the vessel heeled, till the starboard scuppers touched the water. There was another moment of crunching and groaning. Finally the ship righted somewhat, and came to rest.

The first human voice was a cry of alarm from the "broom" at the helm. Other voices answered from between decks, fore and aft. Soon the planking was quivering again, but this time under the tread of hurrying footsteps.

The "Santa Maria" had struck a rock!

While the Admiral and his crew were being lulled to

sleep in the cheer of Christmas tide, a gentle current was sweeping the ship off her compass course toward some shoals that lay well off shore just beneath the surface. The sea was in flat calm. No break on the surface of the water had warned the helmsman of impending disaster.

As he lay on the deck, Gonzalez was almost overrun by the route of terrified seamen. The confusion was too great for anyone to notice his bruised face and the blood that was spattered on the planks about him. Finally a sailor stooped and lifted him to his feet, supposing that he had had a fall as the vessel struck. The Butler, for that matter, was as much impressed by the accident as anyone else. He hurried to his quarters aft, thinking more about the danger to the vessel and to the enterprise, than of his quarrel with the sailor. He called Terreros, however, and the Master-at-table bathed his wounds in cold water and dressed them lest his messmates in the after-castle the next day annoy him with importunate inquiries.

The situation of the "Santa Maria" was desperate, even to the unpractised eye. If she had been beached already a few weeks before, it was because "shipworm," the dread enemy of mariners before the discovery of copper sheathing, had so filled her with leaks as to make her scarcely seaworthy. But the repairs made in "Cuba" had not strengthened her rotted hull. When she struck the rock off Haiti, her bottom caved in as though made of pasteboard. Water had filled the hold both fore and aft.

At once on discovering the seriousness of the accident, the Admiral ordered the masts and cordage cut, to see if the ship lightened of weight above decks would float of herself. That measure was of no avail. The vessel was

hanging on the sharp rocks as on a hook! Juan de la Cosa put off in a boat to carry word to the "Niña" and Vicente Yañez came about and anchored at a safe but convenient distance from the moribund flagship. In the late hours before daylight, the Admiral went aboard the "Niña" and directed a number of attempts at hauling. These also were without avail. Finally, at dawn he sent a boat ashore in command of Diego de Arana to convey Gonzalez as "ambassador" to "King" Guahanacari that the latter might be informed of the plight of his friend the Admiral. In spite of the lumps on his head and the bruises on his face, the once Royal Butler hastily donned his most showy clothes and set out, much flattered at this unexpected demonstration of his own importance. No one observed his wounds—there was still too much excitement about the grounded vessel.

In accord with the request transmitted to the "king" by the former caterer to Their Highnesses, the "Santa Maria" was shortly surrounded by great canoes, manned by crews of Indians. The "king" had wept on learning the bad news, and so had his "courtiers." To be sure, weeping would not float the Floating Forest of the Sons of Heaven; but all his red-skinned subjects were at the disposal of the white men, as also was a village of bohios which happened to be located on the shore, a few hundred yards from the spot where the "Santa Maria" lay fast on the shoal. In a few hours everything movable and of value had been removed from the wreck and sent safely to the beach—cordage, artillery, anchors, chains, furnishings, and the instruments of navigation. "King" Guahanacari was present in person, and was directing the construction of great sheds of tree trunks and thatch, to shelter this spoil of the vessel.

If the crews aboard the two ships were in consternation

at the misfortune which had come so unexpectedly upon them, there were two persons who found some consolation in it: the broom Andujar, and the page Salcedo. Fernando and Lucero were together again, for the moment ashore, but later on, at sea also; for the Admiral would now have to board the "Niña"!

Don Cristobal soon recovered his spirits. The sailors were reporting that gold ornaments were numerous and conspicuous among the natives in this region—why not, since "Cibao" was close at hand? Guahanacari, moreover, had just presented him with a number of religious masks, each with plates of gold in the ears and eyes. The precious metal seemed to act like a magic balm on all the Admiral's mental sufferings, and he said devoutly:

"I see that Our Lord caused me to go aground at this place as a command that I found a colony here. Had I not lost my ship, I could not have done so, for I could never have left them with such supplies, arms, and munitions, as I now have available through the salvage from the full-rigger."

Others caught the Admiral's enthusiasm. The natives were friendly and easily controlled. They were offering gold in visible quantities, promising however that what they had was nothing in comparison with what they would bring in within a few days. The mines themselves would doubtless be soon discovered. On learning that the Admiral was thinking of building a fort and leaving a garrison to exploit the country, all voiced approval, and many volunteered to stay and man it.

Since the "Santa Maria" had grounded on Christmas Eve, the Admiral decided to name his new town, "Nativity." The timbers and beams of the wreck were brought ashore, and a strong house was built, lofty, like a watch tower, with a ditch and a stockade about it. It

was a spacious edifice; and since quarters aboard the "Niña" would be crowded, if everyone returned to Spain, it was desirable that as many as possible should take advantage of this opportunity to remain in the land of gold and spices. Those who stayed behind at Nativity could not fail to become wealthy. The Admiral would hurry back to Spain, to report the discovery of Asia by the route West. They meanwhile would collect gold. In the few months of his absence they would amass a shipload, not to mention the spices, which would doubtless be found when this marvelously wealthy island had been surveyed in a less hasty manner. There would be no trouble with the natives; but to impress them, as soon as the fort was built, the cannon which had been brought ashore were fired at the wreck of the flagship—and the Indians were indeed astounded to see the great stone projectile pierce the sides of the vessel and splash far out at sea beyond. A sham battle was fought between two groups of sailors on the shore, with much shooting of arquebuses and crossbows and a great blowing of trumpets:

"Guahanacari will see," said the Admiral, "that we are amply able to protect him from raids by the Caribes!"

The list of those who could be accommodated at Nativity was soon full. It contained forty-one names! As governor the Admiral designated his cousin "on the left"—don Diego de Arana.

At last the *hidalgo* of Cordoba was finding his dreams realized. Here he was, ruler of a citadel and its garrison, and lord over an empire of who could say how many naked subjects, obedient menials who would lead him to the portentous mines of gold, which everyone knew to be near at hand, though no one had seen them!

Lieutenant-governor would be don Pedro Gonzalez, and next in authority to don Pedro, Rodrigo de Escobedo, Royal Commissioner and Registrar of the Fleet! The once Royal Butler was glad at last to have official status in the expedition where he would have real authority and at the same time opportunity to look after his material interests. He had not the slightest hesitation in volunteering to remain. Like the Admiral, and like the others, he had abundant faith in great and immediate profits. In Gonzalez's love of gold there was none of don Cristobal's lyric exaltation. He was not going to reconquer Jerusalem with the wealth of Asia! With him it was pure avarice, a limited and selfish passion for money, as a means to satisfying vanity and appetite.

The bravest and most adventuresome portion of the crews was drawn off to man the new fortress, men who preferred the mystery of this new country, of which they had seen only a strip of coast, to the hackneyed certainties of a return to Spain, a land that had palled on them and held nothing unusual in store for their futures. Whale fishermen of the Bay of Biscay, Andalucians who had seen service in Africa, the Englishman, "Tallarte de Lages," the Irishman—"Guillermo Ires de Galway," such all figured on the roll of volunteers.

Garvey had confided to Cuevas his decision to stay behind. What could he look forward to in the Old World? In this virgin land a new career might be possible for him. Garvey like the Admiral, like Gonzalez, like the others was dominated by that dream of gold which constituted the madness of the age. Fernando himself would often think regretfully of a voyage home in the "Niña" while so many of his recent comrades would be getting rich at Nativity. Yet no other course than to return

seemed possible to him. Lucero would have to follow the Admiral as page; and it was absurd to think of separating from her, even though don Cristobal promised to be back within a few months. Could he risk remaining, furthermore, in a colony of which the most dreaded of his enemies was second in command?

Garvey was of the same opinion when Fernando sought his counsel.

"I will not always be on hand to help you!" the Irishman reflected. "This man Gonzalez will have you in his power. . . . He may even become governor if anything should happen to Arana."

"But he hates you too," Fernando observed.

"My case is different," Garvey replied. "The governor, Diego de Arana, likes me, and counts on my experience. I will have him with me, against Gonzalez. In addition I have a coat of mail, a crossbow and a sword, which the governor has just given me from the magazine of the wreck. It is this cake-baker here who had better beware of me!"

While the Admiral was fitting the "Niña" for the voyage home, a report came in from the Indians that the "Pinta" was at anchor in a river-mouth about sixty miles to the eastward. The departure was delayed for some days that a long canoe, manned by "King" Guahanacari's men, might carry word to the elder Pinzon. The attempt failed. The Indians, as was later learned, turned back just before reaching the "Pinta", which actually lay concealed behind the next point. Concluding that the report was baseless and that the "Pinta" had never really been seen, the Admiral fixed the third of January for his own sailing homeward.

On New Year's morning Garvey approached Cuevas on the beach with an exclamation of surprise:

"I see you and your brother have changed your minds, and are not going to follow my advice. . . . Well, stay if you prefer. . . . Things may go well with you!"

Though Garvey had pentrated the secret of the lovers, he never had ventured the slightest allusion to Lucero's sex. For him she continued to be the page, Salcedo.

Cuevas was astounded at the words of his friend. Though they could not imagine what would be their fortunes on returning to Spain, they had not volunteered for the garrison at Nativity, and they had taken it for granted that they would sail on the "Niña." Their one thought in the whole matter was to free themselves of Gonzalez. Garvey nevertheless had just seen their names at the bottom of the garrison roll. The names had been freshly added, with a gloss that they were to be in the personal service of the Lieutenant Governor!

Fernando hurried to find Lucero and tell her this important news. The Admiral was absent from his bohio at the moment, but Lucero found the list of names among his papers, and it was just as Garvey said. That same day the warden of the "Niña" chanced to encounter the "broom" on the seashore, and remarked indifferently, as though he were speaking of something long settled:

"You are doing well to stay here, young man. I would stay myself, if it were not for a wife and five children who are depending on me in Palos. Captain Vicente Yañez has already replaced you on the "Niña". Terreros is taking over the work your brother has been doing for the Admiral."

The two lovers looked at each other in dismay. They would not be allowed on the 'Niña!' Through an intrigue of their persecutor they would be left behind in this unknown land subject to his personal authority!

CHAPTER XI

FAREWELL, MARTIN ALONSO!

The evening before the departure from Nativity the "broom" Cuevas, head low, twirling his cap in his fingers to conceal his nervousness, approached his former master in the Indian long-house that was serving as headquarters. It had been his desire, and the desire of his brother, to return to Spain—neither he nor the page Salcedo had asked for leave to stay behind in the fort at Nativity!

Don Cristobal was surprised at this complaint, and supposed it to be due to fear.

"Why," he said, "I always took you for a boy who amounted to something! Stay here and you will make your fortune! Gold will be in here by the barrelful!"

But Lucero was standing nearby on pretense of putting some order into the confusion of basketry, cotton balls, and other objects which Guahanacari had sent in homage to the Admiral to help adorn his lodgings on land. Don Cristobal happened to glance at her, and he seemed suddenly to be reminded that this "broom" of the former flagship and his own valet stood in particularly close dependence on his kindness. Lucero was very pale, and her evident uneasiness moved the Admiral. There was little room on the "Niña" and the trip home was bound to be uncomfortable! However, Cuevas,

he supposed, could be fitted in somewhere! As for Salcedo, there need be no change!

During the next few days, those just preceding the departure, the two lovers saw their enemy, the ex-Royal Butler, on a number of occasions. Gonzalez was already settled ashore, occupying all by himself one of the larger huts provided by Guahanacari. As first lieutenant and immediate successor to de Arana, the governor of the fort, he seemed even more haughty than he had been as a personal friend, unattached, of the Admiral. Two "brooms" of the lost ship formed his immediate staff; but Guahanacari had heeded his importunities and assigned him also a number of Indians.

Cuevas saw the man more than once being carried around on the shoulders of these native servants. In fact, Gonzalez was the first white man to subject Indians to this menial service. The islanders had done such favors for Sons of Heaven before, but voluntarily as an expression of religious awe, and to assist their celestial visitors over swamps, streams, and ponds. The former Royal Butler insisted on these honors for his own person that his new position of authority be emphasized by some unmistakable sign. He had classed himself with the brothers of the "king" who were thus paraded behind the royal litter during religious celebrations.

After the review and shambattle of the second of February the Admiral took his leave of "the virtuous king," Guahanacari. The king again urged him to remain, knowing well he could not do so; and again let it transpire that a life-sized human figure of gold would be ready within a few days.

On the second of January, don Cristobal had a final conference with Diego de Arana and the latter's two assistants, calling their atention to all that he had left

with them to meet various emergencies and predicting that a rain of gold would soon be drenching the fort at Nativity. He consigned into their hands all the merchandise which the Sovereigns had provided for purposes of barter—cheap things which they could exchange at enormous profits. The long boat from the "Santa Maria" could be available for explorations down the coast. He left them the fleet doctor and the fleet surgeon to attend their bodily health, and the chief gunner, "a man skilled in all kinds of mechanic," to supervise arrangements pertaining to defense. Master Diego, the herbist, would have charge of such explorations in the forests as bore upon spices, undoubtedly present in great abundance on the island.

That same night, of the second of January, the Admiral was rowed out to the "Niña," and did not again come ashore. Contrary to plans, however, no start was made on the following day. A heavy sea was running, and the caravel seemed safe at her anchorage to leeward of the bars. But, furthermore, many of the Indians who had been taken aboard from the first islands discovered had stayed ashore. The Admiral was much concerned to take them to Spain, especially the females, and on seeing that only a few men were coming in he determined to postpone his sailing one day more and send a boat of sailors to round the women up.

Fernando Cuevas had several comrades among the men in the squad and obtained permission to go with them. Lucero also found a place in the boat, obtaining her leave on the pretext that she had forgotten one or two of her master's belongings in clearing from the hut he had occupied near the fort. The two young people felt that this would be their last chance to be together in these lands of the new world, and it would be difficult

for them to see each other during the long voyage on the caravel. They must make another forest exploration to some trees which reminded Fernando of the happy afternoon in Cuba. On arriving at the fort, the two lovers slipped behind the huts which Guahanacari had given the white men after the destruction of their vessel, and struck out into the woods.

It was again the same drunken Nature they had found on the other island, the same great butterflies swimming in the green air, the same bowers of foliage harboring the same birds. But there was not the same nearness of the sea, nor the same shoal-girt lagoon to suggest such innocent abandonments as they had enjoyed on their first walk.

Indeed, on this occasion, Lucero could find no relief from her instinctive fear of the deep woods, and the mere consciousness that a mile away there lay a Spanish "town," inhabited by forty white men all anxious to enjoy this first day of freedom in their new home, deprived her of the sense of space, of Edenlike innocence, of liberty which she had had in Cuba.

Fernando for his part was even more at home than on the other walk. He now felt himself an expert in woodcraft. He had learned much about the sounds that are heard in the forests. He was easily able to distinguish the rustle of a tree in the wind, or the movement of an animal in the bushes, from the light almost imperceptible tread of a barefoot native.

Shortly they turned back from the deeper forest with the idea of finding easier walking along the sea; but they had not gone far when Fernando became aware that someone was nearby, and the sounds he heard were not from naked feet but from Spanish shoes. For the moment he thought someone from the village might also be

exploring; but as they made their way shoreward, it was apparent that he and Lucero were being followed. Had their landing and subsequent disappearance been observed?

They had just arrived at a clearing near the shore, when Fernando suddenly stopped and pushed Lucero behind a tree. He had recognized the figure of Pero Gonzalez. The Butler was advancing through the outer shrubbery of the forest and following their trail. Gonzalez had been collecting from the natives specimens of the poisoned Carib arrows, to take home with him as curiosities. Two of these he was now carrying in his right hand—limber but stout shafts of cane, some four feet long, hardened at one end by roasting, fitted with a fish's tooth and bound around with wisps of a poisonous grass that would leave its venom in the wound inflicted.

Gonzalez carried no bow—he could not be hunting. Why did he have those instruments of death? Evidently he intended to use them as spears or lances—thrown accurately from a short range they would easily pierce a man from front to back! It was all clear to Cuevas. If he could be disposed of in these wilds, Lucero would be utterly at Gonzalez's mercy. If perchance a young "broom" were found dead with the two poisoned arrows still in his back, his death would be attributed by the Spaniards to Caribs recently disembarked, or to unknown natives from the interior of the island!

This reasoning, however, was the work of an instant. With a cry to Lucero to keep to cover, Fernando leapt aside just in time to escape an object that whizzed close by his face with that vibrant hissing sound the dragons use in fairy tales.

Gonzalez had thrown the first arrow and missed. But

he was running forward, the second shaft poised in his right hand and ready to be thrown the moment the sometime Royal Butler should find a sure position.

Cuevas darted about from tree to tree, determined to give his assailant no standing mark.

"And I did not bring a knife!"

The thought kept running mechanically through his head. What foolishness not to have borrowed one from a sailor before venturing into the woods!

For a few seconds the pursuit lasted. Then, as Cuevas was making for another tree, Gonzalez hurled his second shaft, but at the tree itself, with the idea of anticipating the "broom's" movement.

The arrow did not pass Fernando and whizz out into the brush as the first had done: it struck the tree-trunk just to one side of the middle and hung there vibrating up and down, the point sunk deep under the bark.

With a cry of joy the youth tore it out with a hard, fast jerk and turned furiously upon his enemy.

"Now I have you, my Lord Coward!" he shouted, advancing upon Gonzalez.

But the man had drawn his sword and began lunging and cutting violently in Fernando's direction. The "broom" realized he had only his lightness of foot to rely on if he were to cope with this stronger and heavier antagonist. He backed off and leapt about, trying to prevent the battle from coming to close quarters and to avoid the vicious thrusts that Gonzalez kept making with the sword.

But the Butler reached far forward in a terrific lunge intended to pierce the boy.

For a second he was off balance! And in a flash Fernando plunged the poisoned arrow into his neck.

Having delivered his blow, Fernando drew back, crouching, ready to run again should the attack be renewed.

But something fell at Gonzalez's feet—his sword, and slowly, as if in great pain, the man raised both hands to the back of his neck; and gently one of them lifted the end of the shaft to relieve the weight which added to the anguish of the wound.

Cuevas could see a stream of blood curling around the winding of poisoned grass, and running down inside Gonzalez's shirt.

The Butler groaned, a groan of terror and pain, such as is heard from animals in slaughterhouses.

"Come! Come quick!" Fernando called to Lucero, and seizing her by the hand he ran with her in a mad dash toward the seashore.

At the beach they looked back to see if Gonzalez were following.

No one was in sight.

They thought they could still hear groans and calls for help. Then these sounds also ceased. The Butler must have fallen to the ground, his two hands still at his neck, one of them supporting the end of the cruel shaft to lighten the pull on the poisoned fish-barb.

More casually then, as if nothing had happened, the two lovers walked along to the village, and sat down at the side of the long boat; but their eyes kept turning in furtive glances toward the edge of the woods. Someone might hear the wounded Butler's calls, and if he were found still alive he would tell what had happened!

It seemed as though the boat would never leave the beach. Only a few of the missing Indians had been found, and the boatswain thought the hunt should be continued as long as possible. As for women, everyone of the female

captives had disappeared. It was not till evening that the boat put out to the "Niña," abandoning the vain search.

But neither Lucero nor Fernando went to their bunks that night. From dark till dawn they stood at the "Niña's" rail, their wide-opened eyes glued upon the black outlines of the shore.

Gonzalez must have died; but there was still the chance that his body might be found. In that case the former Higher Constable of the Fleet, now Commander-in-Chief of the fort at Nativity, would surely come out in a boat to inform the Admiral of his friend's assassination.

But the dawn of the fourth of January broke, and nothing had occurred.

Though the wind was very light, the "Niña" began raising her anchors. Her long boat went out ahead with a cable to tow her past the shoals, behind which she had been lying, through a channel wider than the one she had followed in coming in.

Slowly, her sails flapping now and then as they caught a breeze, with a bare ripple under her bows not high enough to break into foam, the "Niña" crept away farther from the shore. On the beach all the garrison of Nativity, with throngs of Guahanacari's natives had gathered to bid the ship farewell. Two mighty detonations came from the fort: the bombards had been fired in salute, but with blank charges of powder alone. The rolling echo was peppered with many lighter reports—the sailors who had muskets were discharging them in noisy farewell.

From the "Niña's" poop the two lovers still gazed anxiously shoreward. They could recognize most of the figures in the tiny garrison of Spaniards.

Here was the carpenter of the lost "Santa Maria";

and the "broom" who had stood watch with Fernando "at the bottle" on the first night at sea: Good-bye! Good-bye! Yes, and here was the calker, and here the cooper—he had once been a tailor in Seville and had often mended Fernando's clothes on board. Good-bye! Good-bye! Ah, yes, here was the High Constable, now Commander-in-Chief, Diego de Arana, standing a little forward on the beach, apart from the others, one hand resting naked on the hilt of his scabbard, while its glove was in the other, waving a pompous yet affable farewell. And next to Arana, the Royal Commissioner, third in command!

But the lieutenant-governor? Where was Gonzalez? No, Gonzalez was not there! Good-bye! Good-bye!

The sailors on the "Niña" were waving their caps and shouting, but there was much sadness in the parting. Poor men, Christians, a mere handful of them, left behind in that God-forsaken world, on a mere rim of known shore, with a dark wilderness behind. Though of course, gold! There would be gold, gold by the hogsheadful, when the Admiral returned to get them! Good-bye! Good-bye!

The two lovers identified the Englishman, Tallarte de Lages, still silent and undemonstrative. But Garvey was not at de Lages's side—where was Garvey? Oh yes, here was Garvey, all by himself, away out on a point of rock, almost within speaking distance of the caravel as she would pass. He was sitting on the highest boulder, picking dolefully at his harp!

Cuevas could not hear the music, but he thought he could remember a familiar tune from the rhythm of the Irishman's hands, as they touched the cords.

"Good-bye, Garvey!" he called.

The Irishman could not have caught the words. He

was just bidding farewell in his own way to this ship which was sailing off leaving him and forty others behind. William of Galway could not have known that his musical salutation was to be the funeral hymn of the garrison of Nativity! He would never have guessed that by the time Christopher Columbus came back to the New World on his Second Voyage, not one of the forty Christians left on Hispaniola would be alive!

A cone-shaped mountain peak, which the Admiral compared to an Indian bohio and which looked like an island surrounded by a sea of low land, came up on the horizon ahead of the "Niña." Don Cristobal named it "Monte Cristi", and since the winds were light, lingered for two days in its neighborhood. The Admiral was now healthily afraid of shoals, and kept sailors posted at the mastheads to spy them out far in advance. On Sunday, the sixth of January, one of the lookouts called, not a shoal, but a sail!

It was the "Pinta" coming along, with wind astern!

When the two caravels had come to anchor in a shelter, Martin Alonso boarded the "Niña" to see his partner and exchange views on the involuntary separation that had occurred. He did not fail to express his surprise that the Admiral had not, acording to general orders, followed him to Haiti, but had returned to Cuba to waste many precious days there. The hostility between the two commanders was evident to everyone. The Admiral found smiles and courteous phrases to hide it, expressing his true thoughts later in his log. Martin Alonso, less diplomatic in this connection, spoke out with a seaman's frankness, which may have been at times unnecessarily harsh. What most chagrined the Admiral in connection with this whole unfortunate affair was that Martin Alonso had collected more gold than he, and had gained

popularity by dividing it with his crew. Yet don Cristobal was happy to be with the elder Pinzon again. The presence of the "Pinta" gave greater security to his own voyage homeward in such a frail craft as the "Niña." He was now most afraid of what Pinzon might say to the King and Queen. Martin Alonso was just a professional sailor without imagination, a practical man who saw things much more as they were than a "promoter" like Columbus who always found two where there was one. The maddest fancy Pinzon ever succumbed to was to have talked of gold shingles on the houses in Cipango!

Well, here was Cipango—at least the Admiral said it was, and where were the gold shingles? Not a shingle! Not even a house! Not a city, not an elephant, not a vessel with any size to it! Not a trace of a Grand Khan, emperor of multitudes clothed in silks! Just a lot of naked savages, more like a flock of gentle harmless animals than like people! Lazy people, almost like children, scratching at the top soil to get just enough maize to keep from dying of hunger!

Water and firewood were put aboard at Monte Cristi, while minor repairs were attempted on the hull of the "Niña". However it was necessary to head back for Spain without delay. The two caravels were in bad shape, and more from their stops in these tropical shelters than from the wear and tear of sailing. The planking was riddled by "ship-worm." Both vessels had great leaks on either side of their keels. Even when these were repaired, continuous pumping was essential.

It was a long time before the spire of Monte Cristi dropped from view. That lofty peak is visible at sea for many, many miles. Turtles of enormous size were abundant in the neighboring waters and along the beaches. On the thirteenth of January, three days be-

fore the two caravels lost the coast of Hispaniola, came the first unfriendly encounter with natives—a first intimation of the fate that was to overtake Nativity! Some Spaniards who had gone ashore came upon a party of Indians, upward of fifty in number, naked, but otherwise different from the natives hitherto seen on the island. They had very long hair "such as the women wear in Castile, and with headgears of parrot feathers and the plumage of other birds. All of them had long bows, and arrows, and for a sword a club of hard wood."

The redskins feigned kindly welcome to the palefaces, but all of a sudden some of them flew to their weapons, while others produced thongs, apparently to bind the whites after these had been taken prisoners. The seven sailors drew their cutlasses and prepared their crossbows at the first sign of hostility which the red men had ventured to manifest toward them. One Indian received a bad cut across the buttocks and another an arrow in the chest! Had the boatswain in command not interfered, the infuriated sailors would have massacred the whole force.

On the evening of the fifteenth, the Admiral had a last conference with Martin Alonso. Don Cristobal had ordered a course north, and the mariner of Palos could not contain his surprise! It would have been natural to return over the route by which they had come, eastward, that is, across a sea already explored. Columbus cut off the discussion sharply:

"The course will be North! In that direction we shall find fair winds. I know what I am talking about."

The words stuck in the memory of the "Pinta's" captain for many days. Don Cristabol knew! How did he know? It was his first voyage over these seas, yet he "knew" that North was the direction to take in order to find favorable winds!

Again Pinzon thought of the stories current in the ports of Spain and Portugal of navigators who had made discoveries beyond the Ocean, only to perish on their way home triumphant. He remembered especially the rumor of that man who, known under various names but in Spain as Alonso Sanchez of Huelva, had succumbed to his privations after disembarking on a Portuguese island. Of all the orders that Columbus ever gave, the most interesting and important was this selection of the northern route home!

Martin Alonso was convinced of the soundness of the North course during the first days of the return journey. The two caravels met fair winds and a not uncomfortable sea, making good headway without incident of any kind. He was very thankful for this in view of the pitiable condition the ships were in. The "Pinta" especially, once the best sailer in the fleet, was now doing very badly to windward through the loss of her mizzen which had gone by the board.

Things went well indeed from the sixteenth of January to the twelfth of February (1493). The northern course had now been changed and the ships were heading east. But on this latter date the Admiral wrote in his diary:

"We are beginning to have storms with high seas; if this were not a good caravel, soundly built, I should be afraid of foundering."

Thereafter the two caravels were beset by continual storms. They kept for most of the time under bare poles, for fear of turning turtle under the impact of the hurricane. The wind, moreover, increased rather than diminished in violence, working up an indescribable sea. The waves seemed to come from opposite directions as though bent on crushing the little craft as in a vise.

The night of the fourteenth of February was the worst

of the whole voyage. The seas went higher than ever and the wind rose to tornado force. The danger was so great that both captains thought it no longer prudent to try to hold a course. It was better to turn tail to the storm and drift wherever it carried them. The "Pinta" was the first to make this manœuvre, and she dropped out of sight, though she kept showing lights for most of the night, the "Niña" answering by similar signals.

The approach of death sweetens the bitterest hearts and reconciles the most relentless enemies. From his quarterdeck Columbus could see the lanterns of Pinzon's little caravel now lifted on high by the mountainous waters, now sunk for long periods in abysmal gullies. The "Pinta" was now undoubtedly the less seaworthy of the two craft. With one mast gone she could not execute her normal manœuvres. Her timbers were rotten and aleak at the seams. Her very qualities as a swift sailor of light draft stood against her in this unending storm. Columbus felt his eyes fill with tears as he bade farewell to the hapless caravel whose lights grew fainter and fainter over the howling sea and finally disappeared from view. Farewell, Martin Alonso! The comrade of his best adventure was going to certain doom! He would never see him again! And as he thought of his first meetings with the famous captain on the doorstep of Pero Vasquez, he sobbed aloud.

This presentiment of Columbus was to be fulfilled. He was not to see Martin Alonso again. The elder Pinzon was indeed to die, but like a true child of the sea, clinging with his last gasp to the tiller of his caravel, but holding her head to the storm and reaching the point he set out to reach! Only when the coasts of Spain had come into view was he to fall to the deck of his vessel.

At daybreak the "Pinta" was nowhere to be seen.

"Farewell, Martin Alonso!" Columbus repeated. "May the Lord guide thee and keep thee, and bring thee to a good haven!"

But then he had to look out for his own salvation. The storm increased with the coming of the sun. Sailing under one lower, reefed, the "Niña" was constantly buried under combers, though always she managed to get free.

Six hours after dawn the Admiral thought the time had come to invoke celestial measures. He selected as many chickpeas as there were souls on board, cut the sign of the cross on one of them with a knife, and threw them all into a sailor's cap. He had decided to "draw a Romer." The person to whom the marked bean fell must take a vow to visit the monastery of Saint Mary of Guadalupe, in the province of Extremadura, and leave an offering of five pounds of candles. Columbus was the first to draw, and the chickpea with the sign came out in his hand, and he promised to make the pilgrimage if he reached the Spanish coast alive.

Twice again during the day were similar vows invoked. When, with nightfall, no relief came, the company made a vow in common to go in procession, barefoot, and as naked as man's law allowed, to any church of the Virgin they might find on the first land they reached.

No one expected to survive the storm. The boats of those days were plain boardings of plank with wide seams filled with tarpaulin and pitch. Every crash of the waves upon the decks seemed about to tear the timbers to pieces and scatter them at random over the water.

To increase ballast about the Niña's keel empty casks had been filled with sea-water, but that was a pallid remedy in such a storm. The elder sailors had seen weather as bad as that now upon them, and preserved

a serene and confident fatalism; but those who had never before gone to sea—members, for the most part, of the civil staff of the fleet who had chosen not to remain at Nativity, all felt a mortal terror at this constantly increasing tempest.

Fernando and Lucero sat for hours in a corner of a balcony astern, staring like hunted deer at the whitish mountains of water that advanced upon the vessel, lifting her with a mighty bounce up one slope of the wave, then dropping her down, down, down, on the other side with a speed that took the breath from their bodies. It was as though they were falling long distances through space, and, the fall would not end till they had reached the very bottom of the sea!

Cuevas had lost his jaunty audacity as an adventurous youth. For the first time he was seeing what the ocean was like, and he felt overwhelmed at the spectacle of its fury. He wanted to do something for his companion, but he could not imagine what it was. Every time the ship would roll, bringing the heads of the two lovers to the floor, he would throw his arms about Lucero, and kiss her, though he was as much frightened as she.

Toward evening they saw a man in a storm coat pass through the cabin aft, and raising their eyes they recognized the Admiral. He had run down a moment to a little cabin on the "Niña" where Vicente Yañez had his bunk. He did not call for his valet, nor for Terreros, his Master-at-table—the latter was probably praying for rescue in some corner of the after-castle. He took just a biscuit of hardtack and a piece of cheese like any simple sailor, "washing it down" with a beaker of wine. He saw the two young men he had met on the road to Cordoba, smiled in recognition, but waved a "no" as he saw them

trying to get to their feet in his presence. It was not strange to him that two brothers should be locked in fast embrace on this perhaps the last evening of their lives! Poor children! Then he went out again to his place on the quarterdeck, taking the seat of the navigator, and clinging to the arms of the chair as the water came aboard, waist high, about him.

The night of that fourteenth of February, 1493, was, beyond a doubt, the most terrible in the Admiral's life. Dying, just when the victory had been won! Dying, just when Glory and Wealth were kneeling under his hand as submissive slaves! He too was to be overtaken by the fate of those others before him, who had sailed out westward into the great deep, discovered perhaps what he had discovered, and then been swallowed up in a raging Ocean determined that its secret should remain inviolate! A sadder destiny his than that nameless captain's, who had reached an isle of Portugal to die, leaving "to someone" at least the bearings and the courses that led to the isles he had seen! There would be no one to receive the secret of don Cristobal's discoveries! Dying, just when an Arch of Triumph was rising splendid before his eyes!

Suddenly his faith in his own inspiration came to his rescue, making him confident in God's presence and protection. It was he, Cristobal Colon, who had been chosen among the many to bring this great work of Discovery to fulfillment, and the Lord, having thus distinguished him, would not forsake him! Suddenly the lovers saw the Admiral leap to his feet and disappear into the aftercastle.

He had gone to his cabin!

There he drew a piece of blank parchment from a drawer, and wrote on it all that it would hold. He tried

to make a legible hand despite the terrific rolling of the table and the murky light of the swaying lanterns. And he tried to be concise, that the space available might contain the whole story of the voyage and a record of all that he had seen, along with a request that the finder deliver the parchment to the Sovereigns of Spain.

Returning to the quarterdeck, he wrapped the document in a piece of tarred canvas, and tied it securely with a string—a sailor stood at his elbow holding a piece of burning cable that the Admiral might see what he was doing. The parchment wrapped and sealed, Columbus wrote a message on the outside: a reward of a thousand ducats would be forthcoming to any one who consigned the package to the King or Queen of Spain—but only on condition that its seal remain unbroken!

Finally the package was buried in molten wax, making a cake the size of a large loaf of bread.

This, in turn, was placed in a cask and headed in.

Then the cask, at the Admiral's order, was thrown into the sea.

The sailors thought all this a religious incantation to effect the subsidence of the tempest!

The cask was never picked up! Columbus's precaution, had he and Martin Alonso perished, would never have availed! Their discoveries and their end would have remained a mystery!

Later on he thought he should repeat the same message, but in such a manner that it would go overboard as close as possible to the shores of Spain. He wrote a second report on parchment, and placed it in a similar wrapping; but the cask he set on the quarterdeck unsecured. In this case, as the "Niña" went down, the barrel would remain afloat, still at the caprice of wind

and sea, but as much nearer land as the caravel would have drifted before sinking.

On the morning of the fifteenth, the sky brightened and the sea moderated, though still continuing high and dangerous. Land came up to larbard. Some identified it as Madeira, others as the Rock of Cintra off the port of Lisbon. But for three days still the plucky caravel hauled and tacked to stand in toward the unknown shore, without being able to make it, because of the thick weather and the tremendous seas.

On Saturday the Admiral got a little sleep. He had not closed an eye since the previous Wednesday. His feet and legs were paralyzed from the cold and wet and from weakness due to lack of food.

On Monday, the eighteenth of February, the third day before Lent, the caravel made a lee and sent a boat ashore.

She was off Saint Mary's, one of the Azores.

Inhabitants of the coast furnished landmarks, that the ship might find the harbor.

Saint Mary's was a possession of the King of Portugal; and its governor learned first with surprise and then with alarm of the arrival of a Spanish vessel, which, without a doubt, had been engaged in illegal trading within Portuguese domains.

Those on board the "Niña," however, were not thinking of points of law. Their eyes were on a gable with a cross that could be distinguished over the rooftops of Saint Mary's. It was a convent, and as they were joyous to learn, consecrated to the Virgin. The ship's company decided to go ashore and fulfill the collective vow of a procession thither which they had made.

But the devoted sailors, in their shirt tails, with Vicente Yañez Pinzon in command, were all lifting

prayers of thanksgiving to the Virgin when they found themselves surrounded by a mob of islanders, backed by the governor on horseback, at the head of a troop of cavalry.

They were herded from the convent and lodged in the town jail.

Eventually the Portuguese governor repented of his harshness toward these sailors in distress, and began parleys with the Admiral. The imprisoned crew was returned aboard, and Columbus, to smooth everything out, requested that a Portuguese priest board the "Niña" to say mass. Months had gone by without a communion in the fleet!

Then he ballasted his vessel with stone, to make her more manageable in bad weather, took some firewood aboard, and sailed out into the storm.

The storm continued. A sudden squall tore off the "Niña's" last sails, and the caravel was wallowing in the trough of the sea, threatening at any moment to capsize.

In this new emergency, the chickpeas were again brought out. Columbus was designated, by the first lot, to go barefoot and in his shirt tail to say a prayer at the shrine of Santa Maria de la Cinta, in Huelva. The crew meantime took a collective vow to fast on bread and water the first Saturday after they should reach shore.

A week went by, and no land appeared.

But on the fourth of March, the "Niña" tossing under bare poles broadside to a sea which seemed bent on engulfing her in every trough, descried high land, which some took to be an island and others to be the shore of Europe.

It proved to be the Rock of Cintra off the entrance to the river at Lisbon.

Columbus was for a time in trouble with the authori-

ties of the port because of the presence on the "Niña" of two Portuguese sailors. These, it was contended, had no right to be serving in a foreign navy.

The moment his anchor touched bottom in the harbor at Lisbon, Columbus hastened to notify the Court of Spain of his return, through a letter addressed to his patron and friend, Luis de Santangel, styled in official papers as "magnificent lord." The caravel left Lisbon on the thirteenth of March, and just before sunrise on the fifteenth, the "Niña" anchored before the Isle of Saltes. She crossed the bar on the high tide at noon and Columbus was again in the basin whence he had departed on the third of August, seven months and a half before.

That very afternoon another caravel crossed the bar and entered port. It was the "Pinta."

The heroic little vessel had not gone down, as Columbus supposed. With one mast lost she had laid a true course to Spain, without touching any foreign soil, without risking arrest as Columbus had done at the Azores. In spite of the terrific storm, she had reached Bayona in Galicia.

But Martin Alonzo was a dying man.

For weeks he had stood at the helm, day and night, without sleeping, almost without eating, his eyes fixed on the sea for every dangerous wave.

The tremendous effort had finally exhausted this prodigious athlete of the sea.

From Galicia he had despatched one of his men across Spain to Barcelona, where the Sovereigns then were, to inform them of all that had taken place. He feared that his former associate had by that time found his grave in the immense ocean, with his own brother, and all the friends and relatives who had manned the "Niña." Then, disregarding his own condition, he had struck out to

sea again, passing the shores of Portugal without stopping, to make Palos a few hours later than Columbus.

He could not walk. His sailors had to carry him on their shoulders, first to his home, and then, at his request, to the Convent of La Rábida. It was his wish to die in the society of those friars who had so often talked with him of the mysteries of the deep. When a letter from Queen Isabel reached Palos, in reply to the message he had sent her from Bayona, the great mariner of Andalucia was dead.

And he was still to die a second death—the death of oblivion. The living had eyes only for the living, for the victor whom every one could see. Vicente Yañez and the other sailors from Palos, all friends of the Pinzons, remained in modest seclusion in their little harbor on the Ocean.

The Admiral hurried on to Seville, and from there he began a triumphal march to Barcelona, headed by his captive Indians and some men from his crew. Sailors, apprentices and "brooms" had to make the march, before they could collect the balance of their wages!

Farewell, Martin Alonso! Farewell! Farewell!

CHAPTER XII

THE GUEST OF THE CARDINAL

While Columbus was making preparations at Seville for his journey to Court, the inhabitants of the former city kept flocking to a house adjoining the so-called Arch of the Statues, in the Church of Saint Nicholas. It was there that lodgings had been provided for the red men whom the Discoverer had brought back from the Indies (only seven were left after the disastrous return voyage—the others had died at sea). But if a person were not satisfied with red men, he could see a wonderful display of parrots, green, yellow, red, and of *guaiacas*—masks of human faces, fashioned of fishbones, inlaid with gold, and with gold especially about the eyes and ears. There was also gold itself brought from Asia! Only in moderate quantities, to be sure—just a few samples! As far as gold was concerned, the words of the Discoverer were more brilliant than his display.

It was the end of March when Columbus was ready to leave. He would make the journey himself on a mule, followed by a train of pack-animals carrying the exhibits collected on the voyage. Sailors, apprentices, and "brooms" who were to form his escort at the Audience with the Sovereigns, would go on foot, save as they chose to take advantage of mules and horses which the authorities of the towns en route might supply, by Royal Order.

Cuevas and Lucero still remained with the Admiral. Where could they go in this country, which was theirs, but which nevertheless filled them with fright because of Lucero's birth? . . . As long as they clung to the Hero, they felt free from all suspicion and beyond the reach of the Secular Arm. Once they were to leave him, they would lack even the means for a livelihood!

Fernando, moreover, was feeling a certain vainglorious satisfaction at having gone on a voyage that seemed to be leaving people agape with astonishment. For the first time he found himself regarded by others with marked deference as a companion of a famous man on a marvellous adventure.

Evidence of this growth of confidence in the young man might have been noted by an observer who could have seen him take leave of Lucero, just as the triumphal procession was marching forth from the walls of Seville. He would rejoin the party, he explained, later in the day! For the moment he had important business to attend to in the city!

And he rode off on a mule.

He rode straight to the tavern where Terreros, the Admiral's "Master-at-table" had taken lodgings, and called that gentleman forth on the pretext that he had a message to deliver from his former master, don Cristobal.

The young man was vindictive, less by the native tendencies of his character, than by his responsiveness to the ethical ideals of the time in which he lived. In those days a man had to repay offenses received, under pain of passing for a villain!

When Fernando Cuevas saw himself alone in the alley alongside the tavern, save for the company of this man who was old enough to be his father, he began to talk in

a hurried tone of voice, holding fast meanwhile to the bridle of the mule, which he had commandeered in order to make a quick return to the now distant expedition.

"Señor Pero Terreros," he began, his voice trembling and his eyes aflash with anger. "Señor Pero Terreros: Your Worship, in order to do a favor to Señor Pero Gonzalez, may his soul roast in Hell, once ventured in my presence to strike my brother, Lucero. So now, before we separate, I must, as any gentleman should, repay you in your own money."

And straightway he delivered two solid blows on the nose of the Admiral's "Master-at-table," blows which left that gentleman bleeding and staggering from pain and surprise.

The ex-broom drew back with his fists raised in defense, and stood for a moment expecting his adversary to fall upon him.

Señor Pero Terreros did nothing of the kind. Señor Pero Terreros turned his back and ran into the tavern, calling "Murder! Murder!" in a loud voice and appealing to the King's Peace!

Cuevas thereupon leapt to his mule and spurred that animal to a gallop wholly without precedent in its career as a humble beast of burden.

When the cortège reached Cordoba, Beatrice Enriquez, surrounded by all her kin, stepped forward out of the throngs of the curious, the two sons of the Admiral before her.

Columbus could not linger in Cordoba. He had to be off at once for Barcelona, to prepare a second voyage to the lands discovered. But his eyes were full of tears as he kissed his two boys, Diego and Fernando. This man was wholly absorbed in his plans and ideas, worshipping himself in his worship of them. But he had a

vehement passion for these two sons. They were of his blood, and the love he really knew was the love born of blood relationship.

Beatrice gazed at him, in astonishment at his present glory. There was a clutch in her throat as she thought of the days of gloomy happiness they had passed together when Master Cristobal had as yet realized none of his dreams. Vainly she sought a few moments alone with her former lover.

But he scorned all familiarity on her part. Times had changed! He was now somebody! He could not be anything that he had been in the past! "Don Out-at-Elbows" was a kind of phantom vanishing in the haze of pallid memories. The Admiral Major of the Ocean Sea, the Viceroy of all New Found Lands, spoke to poor Beatrice as to a faithful governess who had taken good care of his sons.

She could still retain them for a while, waiting further orders which he would send from Court! He felt certain, on the strength of reports which had come to him thence from friends in the intimacy of the Sovereigns, that the King and Queen now had the two boys in mind. For the time being they could go on at their humble school in Cordoba. But eventually they would probably become friends and pages of Prince John, heir apparent to the Crown.

The Hero was also greeted by the wife and children of Diego de Arana, his "Commander-in-Chief at the new town at Nativity."

All the Aranas were proud of the high post which a man of their family was filling beyond the Atlantic, imagining him dressed in cloth-of-gold and addressing the Grand Khan in familiar language.

No one dreamed that at that very moment his body was probably rotting on the sands of Haiti!

What surprised don Cristobal was that Doctor Acosta failed to pay him a visit. He was eager to see the physician to enjoy that learned man's discomfiture at his success.

Unfortunately the Doctor had been summoned urgently to Barcelona some weeks before to attend King Ferdinand in the latter's troubles.

While the Squadron of Discovery was exploring the islands outlying from the Empire of the Grand Khan, King Ferdinand had been in bed, recovering from a knife thrust delivered by an assassin's hand. As a matter of fact, the assailant proved to be a Catalan peasant, Juan de Canamas. The man probably was a lunatic. The case called for the best medical aid available, and since Doctor Acosta had many times attended the Sovereigns in Cordoba, the physician had gone to Barcelona to be within reach of the King. Acosta was still there: the king's wound had closed, but he was still very weak. The doctor foresaw no early return to his home.

Before the Procession of Discovery left Cordoba, Lucero had an unhoped for encounter. A woman called at the tavern where the Admiral had lodged his escort, and asked to see one Fernando Cuevas, page to don Cristobal.

The young man's face grew pale as he saw the woman. Dressed all in black, with trimmings as for mourning, she looked like one of those perpetual worshippers who spend their days praying in the churches. But despite this devout Christian garb, and a face prematurely aged and heavy with strange wrinkles, Fernando had no difficulty in recognizing the once fair Jewess, Debora, wife to don Isaac Cohen, and mother of Lucero.

Since Fernando and Lucero had disappeared from Andujar on the same day and their respective parents knew of their affection for each other, it was taken for granted that they had run away together. But just before the sailing of the fleet from Palos Fernando had written to his mother that he was leaving for the Indies with the expedition of don Cristobal. Don Isaac's wife had been living in Cordoba for some weeks and she had been looking for the boy ever since the Admiral's party came to town. Where was Lucero?

Cautioning her to show no emotion at anything she might see, he asked Lucero to come to them.

The former Jewess, in fact, showed no surprise. After her experiences of the preceding months there was nothing that could surprise her. Besides it was not unusual for women to disguise as men, in those day, in cases where secrecy was essential.

Rapidly the woman recounted the adventures which she and her family had been through. They had embarked on one of the vessels of the fleet assembled for the removal of the Jews to Africa. Perhaps she had been on one of the very ships that met the Squadron of Discovery as it crossed the Saltes bar and struck out into the Ocean.

The arrival in Morocco marked the beginning of persecutions such as the exiles had never dreamed possible. As they appeared in crowds before the cities of the interior, the Mussulmen treated them more cruelly than the Inquisition had done. A rumor had gone abroad that many Jews had evaded the embargo on the exportation of gold by swallowing their money; and the barbarous Africans cut many of them open to see if this were true. The Moors furthermore thought of making the women and children slaves, and fathers and brothers who re-

sisted were ruthlessly put to the sword. Thus had don Isaac himself perished, courageously defending his family and the little that was left of his fortune.

The Lord, as even the dullest could see, had failed to work any of the miracles predicted by the Rabbis; and driven back upon the coast, with bloodthirsty Moors on one side and the sea on the other, most of the exiles decided to accept baptism. In fact, they were ready to accept any belief, provided they were allowed to escape from such dreadful days. The Spain of the Inquisition looked like a paradise as compared with Africa.

Lucero's mother had returned to Andalucia with the others, seeking the protection of Doctor Acosta. The physician arranged for her baptism and found a refuge for her with other "converts," paying the money for her maintenance himself. So she had been living, assiduously going to church that people might not suspect her origin, and shuddering with horror every time she thought of the terrible end to which the members of her family had come in Morocco.

"Now that you are going to Barcelona, my child, go and see Doctor Acosta. He is there in attendance on the king. Tell him you are the daughter of Isabel de Andujar —that is my name now. You need add no more. We have often talked of you!"

The Admiral's cortège moved on with its train of pack animals. Fame went before don Cristobal's feet, and the populations of the town flocked out to meet him, for a glimpse at those redskins who had come from beyond the Ganges with all the spices and gold of the East.

There was some disappointment when little was seen save flocks of gay colored parrots, and a few dark-faced

Indians not over-exciting to look upon. It was supposed, however, that the many bags of vegetables, woods, salted hides, and cured fish, contained ingots of gold and great strings of jewels.

Barcelona was reached toward the middle of April.

The Admiral's letters from Lisbon, addressed to his powerful friends, the "converts" Luis de Santangel and Rafael-Sanchez, were already known at Court, and gentlemen of the King's suite went out to meet him on horseback, at the gates of the city.

As an imaginative individual, attracted to pomp and theatrical display, the Admiral had taken care to show his cortège to good advantage. In front went the apprentices and the "brooms," Fernando and Lucero among them, carrying long poles as perches for parrots, red, yellow, blue, green, chattering and squawking. Next came a line of sailors bearing the marine trophies of the tropics spread out to view on litters; and after these, another line, with the masks and other ornaments of rudely worked gold, the only real value in all the booty.

But what engaged most attention was the squad of barefoot "Indians," their natural coppery skins decorated with painted spots, and naked save for a plain cotton mantle to shelter them from the cold in this frigid land of the white gods.

To give greater formality to the welcome, the King and Queen had their throne erected in a hall on the ground floor of the palace, not far from the Cathedral. The mounted escort sent out to meet the Admiral drew up in the square around a Gothic fountain; and the Hero with his sailor companions marched past with their exotic trophies and entered the residence of the Monarchs.

On the throne at their side sat don Juan, the heir apparent, and on the steps of their dias, many great lords of Castile and Aragon.

Columbus fell to his knees some distance in front of the Throne. Don Fernando was still weak and pale from his wounds, but he hastened to rise and walk down the steps to lift the Admiral from that posture of humility. Then he ordered a chair without a back brought in, that Columbus might be seated in the Royal Presence—an honor conferred on few at that time.

And the Discoverer, a poet-promoter of facile speech and ready imagination, speaking in the presence of magnates of his country and under the sympathetic glances of two royalties, began the narrative of the mercies which God had showered upon him on his voyage. He held the floor alone. He could soar as he listed to the altitudes of his dreams.

What he had not seen with his own eyes—there had not been time to see everything—he promised to prove on a second voyage. Cuba was mainland, an advanced promontory of Asia, a point, far to seaward, of the rich province of Kinsay. Cipango he had decided to rename as Hispaniola, an island, with enormous deposits of gold inland—the gold oozed out through the flowing veins of the rivers as though the bowels of the hills could not contain such an exuberant stuffing.

As for the plants he had brought back with him, here was the purgative cassia, and the oily aloe, and mastic as good as the product of the Greeks; and here was rhubarb, which could be had by shiploads. If he had found no pepper, no clove, no nutmeg, no cinnamon, that was because he had been there at the wrong season; but a second voyage would surely net whole fleet loads of the

rich condiments so much in demand on the markets of Europe.

But returning to gold—here were ornaments so roughly worked by those simple and innocent natives, and here were grains of gold, big and little, found just before the Indians had been able to melt them up. There they could be seen, just as they came out of the ground! The amount to tell the truth was not great. The masks were contrivances of bone, very thinly spread with gold, and the other trinkets often consisted of but a single leaf—*guanins*, they were called by the natives! But these were only samples of the great masses he had seen in Cipango and which he would develop more extensively on another voyage.

What most moved the audience, and especially the devout Queen, was this group of naked redskins, who stood gazing about in amazement at this solemn ceremony, at all these brilliant costumes, these resplendent jewels, these flashing warriors in armor.

The Spanish Court had an atmosphere of romantic adventure in the cause of Christ. It had just brought to a victorious close, in the capture of Granada, a religious war that lasted seven long centuries. How, therefore, it thrilled as the Discoverer began describing the manners and customs of these guileless savages, and their eagerness to welcome the Gospel of the Church Catholic! Thanks to the Queen and the King of Spain, the Saviour was to gather millions and millions of new believers into his fold!

Columbus burst into tears under the power of his own eloquence. He felt himself at that moment an instrument in God's hands! The Queen, spontaneously, sank to her knees, and the King and Prince John, and at their example the whole Court, did likewise, all lifting their

hands toward Heaven, all eyes brimming with tears. The singers of the royal chapel, who had been invited to the ceremony, burst, without prearrangement, into a *Te deum laudamus*, and as the harps and other instruments joined in, it was as though the Heavens were opening above that audience, the whole chorus of saints and cherubim raising one mighty song of joy at this great event of such promise for Spain and for Christianity.

The King and Queen had often laughed at the enthusiasm of this "promoter" who talked of reconquering the Holy House of Jerusalem with the gold he would win in Asia. But at this moment they were not so certain that such a thing was impossible.

It was an overwhelming triumph for Columbus. On that very day the Monarchs confirmed him in his titles and honors as Admiral Major of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy of all lands he had discovered and should discover in Asia. For many successive days he was called to the Palace that the King and Queen might hear in private of all that he had done and seen and of his plans for a second voyage. The prestige of the ex-"Don Out-at-Elbows" became as solidly established as a religious dogma.

The Admiral of the Ocean Sea was keenly enjoying the great honors showered upon him in Barcelona. The King now appeared in the streets with Prince John riding on one side, and Christopher Columbus on the other. Bartholomew and Diego Colon, don Cristobal's brothers, were knighted and provided with the honorific "don" to wear in front of their names. And the family was awarded a coat of arms with the recent discoveries glorified in its quarters. Diego and Fernando, the two boys, were already on the way to Court to be pages of the Heir Apparent and his companions in study—an honor

enjoyed at the time only by the scions of the high nobility.

Even the Indians whom the Admiral had brought were objects of paternal solicitude to the Sovereigns. The Queen herself arranged for their early baptism. They showed themselves docile and observant in imitating everything they saw, assuming the presence of some magic force in these genuflections and signs of the cross —evidently, the spirits controlled by the white men were stronger than their own! Why should not they follow the lead of black robed magicians who seemed to be obeyed with so much reverence by squaws dressed in brilliant clothes, and by braves in armor bright as crystal who carried clubs with edges that burned like fire?

Amid all these pamperings and delights, the Admiral often thought with secret sadness of the men he had left behind at Nativity. He was constantly reminding the Sovereigns of "the town they owned in the lands beyond the sea." In his vivacious discourse, highly colored with imagination, the miserable palisade of timbers from a wreck, which defended a few bohios donated by a naked Indian Chief, took on the proportions of a flourishing metropolis.

As a matter of fact, the Monarchs were not wasting time. They had sent divers messengers to Seville directing don Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca, dean of the Cathedral there, to begin assembling a great fleet which the Admiral would review as soon as it was ready.

This cleric, Fonseca, who was later to become a bishop, had a passion for things of the sea; and though, in the words of an historian of the time "the outfitting of a fleet was a matter rather for Biscayans than for Bishops," the Catholic Monarchs always applied to him when ships were necessary. All his life long Bishop Fonseca

served as something like a Minister of Marine and a Colonial Secretary, all in one, to Their Highnesses, organizing expeditions that set out for the New World and obtaining Royal patents for explorers who took up the mantle of Columbus when it fell.

The First Voyage had been a romantic adventure, destitute of practical foresight, without adequate preparation, and with insufficient means. Things had turned out well by the happy coincidence of many things. It was as though Nature had conspired with Columbus to bring him to his goal, showing her temper only in the storms of the home journey.

This Second Voyage, of all those captained by the Admiral, was to be the best planned and the best equipped. But he was to make so many mistakes in the course of it, that the Third Voyage was to reflect the beginning of his declining prestige, just as the Fourth and last, was to signalize his downfall.

The day after the grand welcome at the Palace, Cuevas and Lucero set out to locate Doctor Acosta, one of the physicians of King Ferdinand. They were embarrassed for a time by lack of funds. The sailors who had come with Columbus were lodged in the Arsenal, or "navy-yard," of Barcelona, till such time as the Royal Accountants had prepared the second half of the wages due. There was some delay in the matter since, as usual, the King and Queen were short of money.

But at last the two young people found their way to the celebrated physician. He looked affectionately at Lucero's male attire, in no sense surprised that she should be wearing the uniform of a ship's helper.

"My mother," she began, "told me I should come to Your Worship and obey you in everything, as though you were my father."

The physician glanced sharply at the girl. Was there an allusion in her words? Had don Isaac's wife talked to this young lady of her own unhappy marriage and of her relations with Doctor Gabriel? But he could not push the inquiry further in the presence of Fernando Cuevas.

"Indeed I shall take care of you as I would of my own daughter! You as well as your mother can count on me as long as I am alive."

Lucero expressed a desire to return to her mother, and become once more a woman. For that matter, both Fernando and she had received notice that their first enlistment was over. The Admiral was disbanding the crews, inviting those who were willing to go on the next voyage to report at Seville. There the dean, Fonseca, had "set table" for eighteen or twenty vessels.

Cuevas was talking with enthusiasm of this new adventure. He had conceived a passion for the new lands beyond the ocean, and this time he was anxious to see those cities of the Grand Khan, which he had missed on the first visit. Besides, there were no wars at present. Exploration was the best opening for a young man who thought a sword the only respectable instrument of toil.

At any rate, Lucero must first become his wife. But for such a marriage baptism was essential.

Lucero still felt toward the oppressors of her race the hatred her mother and don Isaac had inspired in her. And she looked up fearfully at the physician.

"Your Worship thinks I should be baptized?"

The physician smiled gently as he nodded in the affirmative.

"Why not? Certain situations are beyond the individual! Certain sacrifices are too futile to be asked in the name of faith. Your mother took baptism to save her

life. Why should you not accept the same rite to win tranquillity in your marriage? I will arrange both for the conversion and for the wedding on my return to Cordoba."

On the following day, Fernando Cuevas was walking casually about the streets near his lodgings, when he recognized in the distance the slight but impressive figure of don Alonso de Ojeda. He ran to meet him and the great gentleman remembered him at the first words.

Ojeda had already heard of Cuevas's trip to the isles of Asia. He himself was to accompany the Admiral on the Second Voyage. The archdeacon Fonseca, at Seville, had promised him a high command in the new expedition.

Don Alonso's manner toward the Admiral's page had noticeably changed. Fernando's admiration for the youthful hero of Granada was hardly greater than don Alonso's awe for one who had been across the Ocean Sea. He talked intimately and freely to Fernando, treating him more as a comrade and friend than as a subordinate. After listening to Cuevas's story of the voyage, he returned to his own adventures.

Doña Isabelita was still confined in the convent at Cordoba, but friends had told him that Herboso was relenting. Archdeacon Fonseca had secured a royal pardon for don Alonso's past offenses, and was holding for him the command of one of the vessels in don Cristobal's new fleet.

"If you do not care to remain in the Admiral's personal service, come with me, and I will make you an officer on my boat!"

There was an eager hopefulness in the young man's voice. This voyage to the realms of the Grand Khan would solve all his problems, bringing him wealth, authority, love! Surely when the Admiral made him king

of a whole province in Asia, the Monarchs would compel Herboso to take the girl out of the convent and give her in marriage to the glorious captain and discoverer, don Alonso de Ojeda! The road to the empire of the King of Kings had now been discovered—the rest would be easy. He would win his own fortune with his own right arm!

The young man had not the slightest doubt about his future. He had always felt himself protected by a supernatural power which ever saved him from death. Now he had still another charm. The Archdeacon had given him a little picture, no bigger than your two hands. It was a picture of the Virgin painted by a Flemish artist. No matter what the danger, all one had to do was to take it out, and everything would be well! He was going to take it along on the voyage.

At that moment the gallant *hidalgo* was on his way to the Palace, where he was to show the image to a lady of the court—a great friend of Queen Isabel, who had stood by him during the months of his last wanderings as a fugitive from justice.

Feeling about his belt, the warrior finally drew forth a little tablet of painted wood:

"Look," he said, pointing to the Virgin's features. "How pretty she is! Only my Queen and my Isabel can be compared to her. Of course, they are not quite so pretty—for this is the Mother of God!"

And devoutly the *hidalgo* raised the picture to his lips and kissed it.

"They are going to make me a knight," he continued. "And I shall call myself the 'Knight of the Virgin.' She will watch over me and protect me on land and sea."

Don Alonso carefully returned the picture to his belt, and then drew his cape about him. Before taking leave

of Fernando, however, he gave the boy his address in Seville. There, or at the very latest in Cadiz, they would meet again, to make their common plans for the second voyage!

It was the following day that doctor Acosta was invited to dinner in the magnificent palace of don Pedro de Mendoza, Grand Cardinal, and the "third Sovereign" of Spain. This powerful magnate, with his forty millions of income a year, set one of the most sumptuous tables in Europe. Not a noble at Court so highly situate as not to be happy, as well as proud, to be asked to partake of the Cardinal's viands. And the Cardinal was famous for his agreeable conversation, as well as for his lavish splendor. As contemporaries wrote: "The Cardinal was in reality the Court. When he was in attendance on the Sovereigns there was a true Court; when he departed, the Court ceased to exist, since there was no money in the Royal treasury to support one." The guest of honor at the dinner in question was the doctor's old friend, Master Cristobal, now don Cristobal Colon, Admiral of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy of all New Found Lands. The doctor could do nothing but accept!

Columbus had been assigned to the most distinguished seat at the table, as highly placed as the Cardinal's own, and at the latter's side. His food was served on "covered dishes" and the guests all made "pregustations" in his honor, a tribute paid only to the most celebrated dignitaries.

The custom of "pregustation" grew up as a device to prevent the poisoning of kings and personalities of importance. The plates were brought in from the kitchen on rich napkins covered with a metal hood. The "pregustation" (*salva*) was performed by the host, or by one or another of the other guests, who lifted the hood and

tasted the food before it was set before the person honored.

For the first time in his life, the Admiral saw himself served at dinner with solemnities accorded for the most part to royalty. On this the Cardinal had insisted, treating Columbus further with public demonstrations of intimacy that no one should doubt that he considered the Discoverer wholly as an equal.

The Admiral, dressed in his red scarlet uniform with a gold hilted sword thrust into a scabbard of red Cordoba, recognized the doctor who still wore his dark cloak without a sword, with the bearing at once modest and distinguished of the established man of letters. And at the first opportunity, after dinner was over, the Admiral left the gentlemen crowded about him to greet this friend of less happy days.

They spoke affably of Cordoba and of people there, each fencing a little as though trying to avoid expression of something that was on both their minds. But at last Columbus recalled their last meeting, when the physician had finally and flatly rejected his plans for reaching Asia by the route west.

"Well, now, Doctor Acosta," said the Admiral, "Your Worship must admit that my plan for the sail west to Cipango and Cathay was not so crazy! I have come back victorious, by the Grace of God!"

Acosta answered with a smile equally ironical:

"But did you really get to Asia? And how was the Grand Khan? Did you meet any of his representatives? What cities did you find of those described by Marco Polo and Mandeville?"

Such objections were an old story with don Cristobal. He merely shrugged his shoulders.

"This was a very quick voyage. I am going back

again, and with the help of God, I will look at things more at my leisure."

And he turned away, in order not to seem discourteous to the important gentlemen who were waiting for him. As he left, the doctor threw one last remark at him:

"I still believe that Asia is much farther away than you went. What do you think, Admiral? Couldn't those islands be entirely new lands, places that no one ever heard of before, a new world, perhaps, that has been waiting for centuries and centuries for someone to discover it?"

This hypothesis, which the doctor had put forth on a previous occasion, still seemed so absurd—born as it was of jealousy and chagrin—that don Cristobal did not trouble to answer. With a smile of pity he walked away with his noble escort.

Acosta, for his part, stood in a thoughtful mood, working at the doubts that had arisen in his mind.

What if there were new lands? What if there were a New World to the westward? How wonderful indeed!

Don Cristobal had tried to reach the Indies, believing them to be three times as near as they really were. And now these new lands, to his good fortune stepping forward into his path, without his knowledge or consent!

One of the most portentous accidents of history!

But in that case, mused the doctor, it would not be a "discovery." It would be a "collision." A distinction, with a difference! And all the more wonderful!

THE END

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